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This One



EASH-RJR-NUBE









WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE .

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY JOHN TAYLOR, KNOWN AS THE "CHANDOS" PORTRAIT .

# ENGLISH LITERATURE

## AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD

IN EIGHT VOLUMES

VOLUME II — PART II

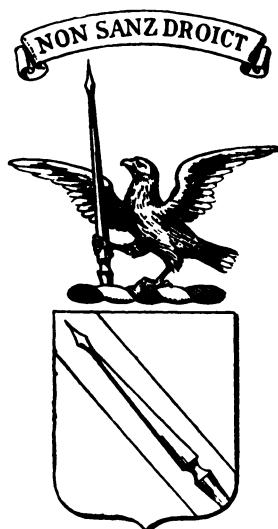
FROM THE AGE OF HENRY VIII TO THE  
AGE OF MILTON

BY

RICHARD GARNETT, C.B., LL.D.

AND

EDMUND GOSSE, M.A., LL.D.



SHAKESPEARE'S ARMS

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## CHAPTER V

### SHAKESPEARE

WHEN the Greeks spoke of Homer, they did not always name him. They said *the* poet, certain that no vestige of doubt could exist as to the application of the description. Englishmen might thus speak of Shakespeare with no less security from misapprehension. In a literature eminent beyond most for the multitude of its great poets, many of whom may have excelled Shakespeare in this or that branch of art, not one could be selected as a possible rival to Shakespeare, and for this plain reason, that their excellence is particular, and his is universal. There is nothing within the compass of poetry in which he has not either achieved supremacy or shown that supremacy lay within his power; there is no situation of human fortune or emotion of the human bosom for which he has not the right word; if he cannot be described as of imagination all compact, it is only because his observation is still more extraordinary. His art is as consummate as his genius, and save when he wrote or planned in haste, impeccable. Infallibility may equally be predicated of the other two supreme poets of the world, Homer and Dante, but the restriction of their spheres forbids any claim to Shakespeare's distinguishing characteristic of universality. The knowledge, and by consequence the sympathy, of their periods was narrow in comparison with his; he was in contact with a thousand things of which they had no cognisance; while, since Shakespeare's day, human interests and activities have so greatly multiplied that, unless civilisation should retrograde, the occurrence of another universal poet may well be deemed impossible.

*Shakespeare  
as world-poet*

This overawing vastness of Shakespeare renders it almost impossible to obtain a point of view from which he can be contemplated as a whole. The critic will do best to gradually wind into his subject by a recital of the ordinary, and in Shakespeare's case the obscure, circumstances of ancestry and parentage.

That the apparent etymology of the surname Shakespeare is also the correct one is proved by the existence of an Italian representative, Crollanza, which cannot possibly be a corruption of anything, but must have been bestowed upon the original bearer from some connection between him and the wielding of the spear. A similar cause would originate in England the name Shakespeare, which is of considerable antiquity in the south midland counties. Unfortunately, the earliest record of its occurrence discovered so

*Shakespeare's  
family history*

far is one establishing that the bearer, William "Saxspere" of Clopton in Gloucestershire, a hamlet about seven miles south of Stratford-on-Avon, was hanged in 1248. Another early Shakespeare is recorded as a felon, and another as a perturber of the King's peace. It may have been some association of this description that in 1487 induced an Oxford scholar and incipient Don, not gifted with the faculty of prevision, to change his name of Shakespeare into Saunders, "because it was thought low (*vile*)."

Others were less sensitive; the name is found from L'errith in the north to Brixton in the south; and the industry of Mrs. Stopes has unearthed an amazing number of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Shakespeares, principally in War-



**Shakespeare's Birthplace before restoration**

*From Wheeler's "History of Stratford-on-Avon," 1806*

wickshire. There, in 1557, John Shakespeare, formerly of Snitterfield, and probably son of Richard Shakespeare, yeoman of that village, but himself of Stratford-on-Avon, married at Aston Cantlowe, Mary, daughter of Robert Arden, a farmer, but sprung from a good Warwickshire family. To them in 1564, and as tradition declares, on April 23, the day dedicated to England's patron saint, was born WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. The entry of baptism is on April 26.

At the time of Shakespeare's birth his father was a prosperous tradesman, who had filled various municipal offices, including that of chamberlain to the borough. In 1565 he was alderman, in 1568 bailiff, and, in the light of things to come, it is most interesting to learn that in that capacity he was the first townsman of Stratford to accord an official welcome to players, the

companies of the Queen and of the Earl of Worcester. So late as 1575 he appears as buying two houses, but shortly afterwards he is so impoverished as to be unable to contribute fourpence towards the relief of the poor. In 1578 and 1579 he is found alienating his wife's property at Wilmcote and Snitterfield, and in 1586 he is deprived of his alderman's gown for non-attendance, being apparently unable to leave his home for fear of arrest. These circumstances must have made Shakespeare's youth unhappy, notwithstanding the antidotes of a singularly sunny and genial disposition, and of the high spirits natural to his age. The inevitable decline of the family in the estimation of their neighbours must have been especially galling to him ; and it is probable that his sense of slight and wrong reappears in Hamlet's famous soliloquy, where many griefs are enumerated of which the Prince of Denmark could have had no experience, but which were only too familiar to John Shakespeare and his son. Among them is " the law's delay," of which the elder Shakespeare made ample trial in an unsuccessful litigation to recover his wife's property. Fortunately these embarrassments could not prevent Shakespeare from receiving a good education, he being entitled to free tuition at the Stratford grammar school. The character of the education then given at English grammar schools, a point of great importance in connection with the attempts that have been made to represent Shakespeare as an ignorant man, has been ably investigated by the late Professor Spencer Baynes. Mr. Baynes shows that the acquaintance with the technicalities of rhetorical instruction demanded by the allusions in *Love's Labour's Lost* could easily have been acquired by a stay at school of five years, agreeing exceedingly well with the probable age, seven or eight, of Shakespeare's entering the school and that of twelve or thirteen, when he would be old enough to assist his father in his business, and, considering the growing embarrassments of the elder Shakespeare, would almost certainly be withdrawn from school for that purpose. By this time he would have read in the ordinary course Valerius Cato, Æsop, Mantuan, a considerable part of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and something of Cicero, Terence, and Virgil. This would be a fair Latin outfit, and there is no good reason to believe that Shakespeare materially augmented it in after life. In the ordinary course Greek grammar would be commenced in the fifth year, but no Greek author would be read. Mr. Churton Collins has endeavoured with much ingenuity to establish Shakespeare's acquaintance with Greek literature, but when it is considered that he could only have acquired Greek in mature life by solitary study or private instruction, and that Latin translations would be difficult and uninviting, the initial improbability must be held to outweigh the precarious evidence of apparent coincidences which may be otherwise accounted for. It may be added that there was no such Hellenic sentiment in Shakespeare's day as might in our own induce a man to take up the study for himself. The peculiar charm of the language and literature, which have yielded such stores of inspiration to the poets of the nineteenth century, was as yet but feebly discerned. The classical atmosphere was almost entirely Latin. Another important factor

in Shakespeare's education must not be overlooked—the English Bible, which in the Genevan or the Bishops' version would be diligently read in the school. Shylock's speech, "When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep," shows Shakespeare's intimate acquaintance with Scripture narrative.

*Shakespeare's  
occupations  
in youth*

John Shakespeare was probably a man of many occupations, and among them may well have been that of a butcher. The Stratford tradition preserved by Aubrey that young Shakespeare assisted his father in this business is con-



Shakespeare's Birthplace as restored at the present day

*From a photograph*

firmed by a minute detail. "When he killed a *calf*," says Aubrey, "he would do it in a high style and make a speech." The lad would not yet be old enough to slaughter an ox, but would be fully up to a calf. If, as Aubrey proceeds to inform us—and there is no reason to discredit a tradition which there could be no motive for inventing—"there was at that time another butcher's son in this town that was held not at all inferior to him for a natural wit, but died young," it follows that Shakespeare himself must have been regarded as a "natural wit" beyond the common. The funeral orations upon the calves, interesting prefigurements of the future discourses composed for Mark Antony, may have served for a time as a vent for the juvenile ferment of a poetical soul, but Shakespeare is not likely to have continued long at the trade of butchering. It is a tribute to the universality of his genius that almost every possible secular occupation has been conjectured for him upon



the strength of what has been deemed the internal testimony of his own writings. The only external testimony worth anything, and its value is not slight, is the tradition that he was for some time an assistant in a school. This would be exactly the profession which a well-educated young man at a loss for a livelihood would be likely to follow; and the truth of the statement is strongly confirmed by the scholastic scenes in *Love's Labour's Lost*, which certainly seem to proceed from one who had not



**Anne Hathaway's Cottage**

*From a photograph*

merely learned but taught the accidence. It further explains the remarkable familiarity with legal technicalities which has led many to believe that Shakespeare must have been a lawyer. A schoolmaster would be very likely to be employed by attorneys in copying documents. A word may be added respecting Shakespeare's handwriting, which has been made an argument against his authorship of the works ascribed to him. All the undoubted autographs of Shakespeare appear on legal documents, and are written in the hand appropriate to business matters. This affords no proof that he could not write the Italian script if he thought fit. Leaving the literary side of the question out of sight, he must, as actor and manager, have continually received letters in the Italian character, and it would be surprising if he could not write what he must have been well able to read. "Methinks we do know the sweet Roman hand."



*Shakespeare's  
marriage*

If Shakespeare at any time taught school it will be a question whether this preceded or followed, or both, one of the most important events of his life, his marriage, about November 1582, with Anne or Agnes Hathaway, daughter, as is most probable, of Richard Hathaway, a yeoman of Shottery, then lately deceased. The register of the marriage, doubtless celebrated in the neighbourhood, has not been found, but the date is approximatively ascertained by a singular document dated November 28, 1582, and preserved in the registry of the diocese of Worcester, by which two Stratford husbandmen undertake to bear the bishop harmless in the event of any irregularity being found to exist in the marriage then about to be contracted. As it is provided that the banns shall only be asked once, as the consent of the bride's friends is stipulated for while the bridegroom's parents are ignored, and as the birth of a daughter in May 1583 discloses the existence of a pre-nuptial intimacy, the affair had evidently some very unsatisfactory features, not the least of which was that the bride was eight years older than her husband. Shakespeare has given the world the benefit of his experience when he says in *Twelfth Night* :

Let thy love be younger than thyself,  
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent.

And in Prospero's impressive warning to Ferdinand :

If thou dost break her virgin knot before  
All sanctimonious ceremonies may  
With full and holy rite be ministered,  
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall  
To make this contract grow.

And again in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, written while his wound was fresh :

As the most forward bud  
Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,  
Even so by love the fair and tender wit  
Is turned to folly, blasting in the bud,  
Losing his verdure even in the prime,  
And all the fair effects of future hopes.

*Shakespeare's  
removal from  
Stratford*

There is no dramatic necessity for any of these speeches, and Shakespeare would hardly have penned them if he had not felt that he had missed domestic happiness by disregard of precepts which he afterwards found to be wise. With Milton, Coleridge, and Shelley he must be enumerated among those who have contracted unhappy marriages out of mere precipitancy. No external proof of incompatibility can be given ; the estranged pair did not part with or without mutual consent, as in the cases of Shelley and Coleridge, nor did Mrs. Shakespeare convert her husband to the lawfulness and expediency of divorce, like Mrs. Milton. They lived together for a time ; twins, a son and a daughter, were born about January 1585 ; but in the course of that year, as most probable, Shakespeare bade adieu to his family and his native place, neither of which, so far as is known, did he see again for eleven years. Family unhappiness may well have conduced to this exodus, as well as pecuniary embarrassment and the misfortunes of Shakespeare's parents. These reasons

would amply suffice without the deer-stealing adventure in Sir Thomas Lucy's park traditionally related of Shakespeare, which, nevertheless, there is no sufficient reason to disbelieve. We have it on the highly respectable authority of Archdeacon Davies in the seventeenth century that Shakespeare "was much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits." A scurrilous ballad against the Lucys, attributed to him, is undoubtedly spurious; but the ridicule of the family in *Henry IV.* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is too palpable to be explained away. It is observable, however, that these attacks are not made until after Shakespeare's return to Stratford, as though the cause of resentment was not so much the original prosecution, now twelve years old, as some fresh affront. The Lucys must have been disagreeably surprised to see the banished poacher returning, and by no means in the guise of the proverbial bad shilling, but rather as gold tried in the fire.

We are now upon the threshold of the most important era of Shakespeare's



**Kenilworth Castle in the Seventeenth Century**

*From a print by Hollar in Dugdale's "Antiquities of Warwickshire," 1656*

life, the period when his genius took its bent and his subsequent career was virtually determined. To our confusion, these momentous years are an absolute blank for the biographer. Except for one mention of his name in a legal document, there is no trace of him from 1585 to 1592. This at least evinces the vanity of denying him the character of an author on the ground of his imputed want of culture, ignorant as we are what influences may have affected him during this blank interval, or what opportunities of culture may have fallen in his way. But his saner and more responsible biographers also appear to us to err in too readily consenting to suppose him all this time a denizen of London, and for most of it practising the player's art or following some employment of even less social repute. It seems to us certain that he must have seen far more of the world and mingled with associates of a much higher class. Nothing is more remarkable in his earliest productions than their perfect polish and urbanity. The principal characters in *Love's Labour's Lost* are princes and nobles, true to the models which he might have found in contemporary society. The young patricians in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* have in every respect the ideas and manners of their class. The creator of such personages must have been in better company and enjoyed a wider outlook upon society than can easily be believed attainable by an actor or a

*Probable  
course of  
Shakespeare's  
life*

resident in a single city. Had this been otherwise, Shakespeare must have winced when he wrote in what, perhaps, was his first play, "Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits": but we feel confident that he had "seen the wonders of the world abroad." Three pieces of evidence may be adduced in favour of this opinion: The implied assertion of his adversary Greene, that he had not even in 1592 followed the theatrical profession very long,<sup>1</sup> since in that year, though doubtless with more direct reference to his authorship than to his acting, he calls him "an upstart crow;" the idiomatic ease of the French scenes in *Henry V.*, indicating that he had acquired the language where it was habitually spoken; thirdly, and most important, his familiarity with the moods and aspects of the sea. One passage, in particular, affords, if we do not err, the key to the time and occasion of Shakespeare's foreign travel. It is the passage in the Chorus's speech in the third act of *Henry V.*, describing the departure of a great naval armament:

Suppose that you have seen  
The well-appointed king at Hampton pier  
Embark his royalty; and his brave fleet  
With silken streamers the young Phœbus fanning.  
Play with your fancies, and in them behold  
Upon the hempen tackle ship-boys climbing;  
Hear the shrill whistle which doth order give  
To sounds confused; behold the threaten sails,  
Borne with the invisible and creeping wind,  
Draw the huge bottoms through the furrowed sea,  
Breasting the lofty surge.

*Shakespeare*  
*a. a. Leicester*

It cannot be believed that the author of these lines had not seen what he describes. Many great fleets sailed from England in Elizabeth's reign, but mostly on distant or dangerous expeditions, in which Shakespeare could not have taken part. There was one memorable exception, and this an expedition in which he might well have been thought to have been concerned, apart from any evidence of acquaintance on his part with Courts, or camps, or navies. In December 1585, Leicester sailed from Harwich at the head of a great force, to assume the government of the United Provinces in their war with Spain. The year is that in which Shakespeare disappears from observation, and in which there is every reason to suppose him to have quitted Stratford. Leicester was the great lord of his part of the country, to whose protection he would naturally have recourse, and to whom it would be easy for him to obtain a recommendation. A band of youths from Warwickshire did, we know, follow Leicester, and few Warwickshire youths can have had more cogent reasons for making one of their number than William Shakespeare. It is not necessary to suppose that his entry into Leicester's service followed immediately upon the deer-stealing adventure. He may well have betaken himself to London, where he would be likely to find at least one friend in a Stratford youth of his own age, Richard Field, son of a tanner at Stratford, and then apprentice

<sup>1</sup> The supposed reference to "W. S." as "the old player" in *Willobia's Avis* (1594) has no reference to the theatrical profession, but to the part which the person thus designated had sustained in a love-drama of real life.

to the eminent printer Vautrollier, whose daughter he afterwards married, Vautrollier being then an exile in Edinburgh, but still carrying on business in London, his future son-in-law, whose term of apprenticeship had nearly expired, was in a more independent and responsible position than usual with apprentices, and may have been able to give Shakespeare substantial assistance ; and the rather as his master had dedicated books to Philip Sidney, Leicester's nephew and associate in his expedition. Certain it is, at all events, that Shakespeare would have eagerly embraced the opportunity of accompany-



**The Parish Church, Stratford-on-Avon**

*From a photograph*

ing Leicester's expedition if it had presented itself, and there is good reason to think that it actually may have done so. Leicester took a company of actors with him to the Low Countries, and Shakespeare may have been a member of it, but it is quite as likely that he served in some other capacity. Without question the new scene which would open upon him, the magnificent shows and triumphs with which Leicester was received, the view of tented fields and leaguers, the daily talk of war and statecraft, the association with all sorts and conditions of men, would go far to bestow that knowledge of good society, and create that easy and confident attitude towards mankind which appears in Shakespeare's plays from the first, and which (we must concede this much to the Baconians) are so unlike what might have been



expected from a Stratford rustic or a London actor. The opportunities opened up to such a man by a Continental visit in Leicester's train would be infinite: none can say what adventures he may not have experienced, what personages he may not have encountered, or upon what missions he may not have been employed. Some slight and very possibly fallacious indications of acquaintance with widely separate parts of the Continent are nevertheless too interesting to be omitted. Mr. Stefansson (*Contemporary*



Nicholas Rowe

(The earliest of Shakespeare's editors)

After the portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller

*Review*, vol. 69) has, in our opinion, proved that Shakespeare, before writing *Hamlet*, had obtained from some source an intimate knowledge of the Castle of Elsinore. The hypothesis of a personal visit is nevertheless unnecessary, for Leicester sent actors to Copenhagen in 1585, among whom were three who subsequently belonged to Shakespeare's own company, and from whom he might easily obtain any information he desired. Although, however, this supersedes the necessity for Shakespeare's visit, it does not demonstrate that it never took place: and nothing would so well fit in with the long voyage which he certainly must have made at some time or other of his life. The other apparent point of contact between Shakespeare and the Continent is the

special knowledge which he seems to possess of Venice. Here, again, there is not sufficient evidence of actual ocular inspection. If, however, Shakespeare ever visited Germany either on a confidential errand or as a member of one of the numerous troops of English actors who at that time ranged the country, it is quite conceivable that the troubled state of France and the Netherlands might compel him to return by way of Venice.

As already remarked, the existence of a long unknown interval in Shakespeare's life, during which he may have been subjected to influences making for high culture, disposes of the only plausible argument adduced by the advocates of the Baconian authorship of his plays and poems. Even were the case otherwise, it ought to be evident that, whoever the author might

*Shakespeare  
and Bacon*

have been, he could not be Bacon. To suppose Shakespeare's dramas, Bacon's philosophy, and Bacon's politics to be the simultaneous operation of a single brain is to credit the human mind with higher powers than it possesses. If Bacon had been the greatest of poets instead of a very middling one, and had, after his disgrace, devoted himself to dramatic literature instead of science, he might conceivably have produced something like Shakespeare's plays; but the idea that such works could proceed *pari passu* with the ponderings of philosophy and the strife of politics shows that the theorist has a very imperfect apprehension of their greatness. It is, moreover, the case that no great lawyer has ever been a great poet. Many great poets have been brought up to the law, but one and all have renounced it as soon as they could, and no eminent lawyer has ever produced a work of high imagination. The productions of Montesquieu and More, which approach most nearly to this character, are, after all, but *jeux d'esprit*. After this it should be superfluous to dwell on the occurrence in the plays of words in the Warwickshire dialect and allusions to Warwickshire local circumstances, or to the unanimous testimony of contemporaries. A word, however, may be devoted to one which we do not remember to have seen brought forward—the impossibility of the Baconian secret being kept. Baconians talk as if Bacon had nothing to do but to write his play at his chambers and send it to his factotum, Shakespeare, at the other end of the town; but nothing can be clearer than that points must have been continually arising requiring consultation with the author, that this author must have lived in a dramatic atmosphere, and been in constant communication with the theatre. That this was really the case is proved by the directions to the players in *Hamlet*. No one, surely, can doubt that the writer of this scene had been in the constant habit of giving instructions to performers. If he were Shakespeare, no question arises; but if he were Bacon? Did he go down to the theatre for the purpose, taking boat or riding over Old London Bridge? or did he drill the players at his chambers? In either case the actors would speedily discover that they were being tutored by the author in person, and the secret would soon be all over the town. There is no escape from this, unless by maintaining that whereas all Hamlet's other speeches are by Bacon, this one is by Shakespeare. Unfortunately, it contains five sentences that have become household words wherever English is spoken.

This particular objection does not apply to the Baconian authorship of the poems and sonnets, which has been maintained with remarkable ingenuity in an anonymous volume by a most accomplished writer—the Rev. Walter Begley. We can only remark that Mr. Begley's case will be much fortified when he is able to produce from Bacon's acknowledged writings lines so instinct with the innermost spirit of poetry as

But that wild music burdens every bough,

or

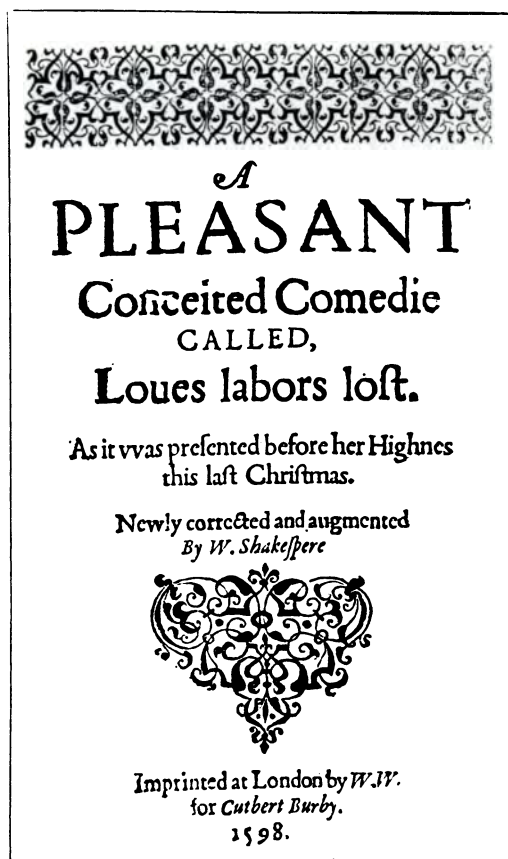
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

Bacon might be deemed capable of composing the speeches of Ulysses but these woodnotes wild!

*The begin-  
nings of  
Shakespeare*

The obscurity which covers Shakespeare's early years during his absence from Stratford is strikingly illustrated by the circumstance that the only affirmation we are able to make respecting them refers not to what he did write, but to what he did not. In his dedication of *Venus and Adonis*

to Southampton he designates this poem as "the first heir of his invention." If this is to be taken in the most obvious sense, it would appear that he wrote nothing before 1589, for the poem is indebted in several passages to Lodge's *Scilla*, published in that year. It consequently follows that none of his plays can have been written before 1590 at the earliest. How long before this time he had been upon the stage it is impossible to say. The earliest authentic document connecting him with it dates from 1594, but we know from Greene's obijuration that he had obtained much credit by 1592, and had, no doubt, for some time been in a position to insure the representation of anything he might write. The crudity of *Titus Andronicus* has occasioned it to be frequently regarded as his first dramatic effort, but it was produced as a new piece in 1594, under which date Shakespeare's possible share in it will be considered. The first of his plays were undoubtedly the three early comedies, *Love's*



Title-page of "Love's Labour's Lost," 1598  
The earliest existing title-page bearing Shakespeare's name

*Labour's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which must have appeared in 1590-1591, or perhaps in the latter year only. The question of priority among them is hard to settle, but we may concur with Mr. Lee in awarding precedence to *Love's Labour's Lost*. All three indicate that the runaway Stratford youth had within five or six years made himself the perfect gentleman, master of the manners and language of the best society of his day, and able to hold his own with any contemporary writer. All belong to the same period of youth, immature but healthy. In *Love's Labour's Lost* youth is evinced by a prevailing extravagance of diction and ostentation of wit and cleverness, though Shakespeare could even then formulate so sane a maxim as

A jest's prosperity lies in the ear  
Of him that hears it ;

and the concluding songs are as finished as anything he ever wrote. In *The Comedy of Errors* youth is exhibited in the constant flow of high animal spirits, the play comes nearer to a farce than any of Shakespeare's except *The Taming of the Shrew*. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is much quieter, but the atmosphere is entirely that of youth's golden romance. All the leading characters are young people, and all act upon impulse, with no sense of responsibility. "Love is too young to know what conscience is." The plot of *Love's Labour's Lost* has not been traced, and may be Shakespeare's invention. The play contains

many references to contemporary events in France, alludes to persons known in London life, and satirises contemporary manners generally. The pedant Holofernes, except in so far as he may be a caricature of some country schoolmaster, appears to be compounded out of two characters in Rabelais, another token of Shakespeare's rapid development as a man of letters. The plot of *The Comedy of Errors* is taken from the *Menæchmi* of Plautus. It might not have been beyond Shakespeare's power to have



**The Fortune Playhouse, Golden Lane**  
From Wilkinson's "*Londiniæ Illustrata*," 1819

acquainted himself with this not very difficult play in the original, but there seems some internal evidence of his having used a translation. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is mainly derived from an episode in the Spanish romance of *Diana*, by Jorge de Montemayor: through the medium, as a slight circumstance indicates, of a French version. Of the three dramas, *Love's Labour's Lost*, "a mine of jest and wit and whim," says Platen, is the wittiest, *The Two Gentlemen* the most poetical, *The Comedy* the most humorous. *Love's Labour's Lost* manifests the most intellectual force, but there is more finish and more contrivance in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, where the versification is more careful and systematic. Shakespeare seldom wrote a sweeter passage than this :

The current that with gentle murmur glides,  
Thou knowest, being stopped, impatiently doth rage ;  
But when his fair course is not hindered,  
He makes sweet music with the enamelled stones,  
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge



He overtaketh in his pilgrimage,  
And so by many winding nooks he strays  
With willing sport, to the wild ocean.

*Love's Labour's Lost* was acted before the Queen at Christmas 1597, and printed in the following year with revisions, as alleged, by the author. The other two plays appeared for the first time in the Folio of 1623.

"*Henry VI.*" These three comedies may be referred with confidence to the years 1590-1591. *Love's Labour's Lost*, at all events, may be supposed to have succeeded well from its revival at Court and from the fact that the title was adapted for another play, *Love's Labour's Won*, mentioned by Meres in 1598,



Edmund Kean as Richard III

but not extant, unless, as is very likely, it is to be regarded as an early draught of *All's Well that Ends Well*, which is not named by Meres, and is probably later than 1598 in its present form. It would probably be produced soon after the appearance of the play whose title it adapted. Shakespeare was at the same time being introduced to a new sphere of dramatic activity, which found him much occupation for some years. In March 1592 a new piece, called *Henry VI.*, was produced at the Rose Theatre, not by Shakespeare's company, with such success that, according to Nash, writing as a contemporary, it was witnessed at different periods by ten thousand spectators altogether. It is, no doubt, the play included in Shakespeare's works as *The First Part of Henry VI.*, in which, however, few certain traces of his hand can be discovered, inso-

much that he is absolved from the charge, so frequently brought against him, of having slandered Joan of Arc. A Second and a Third Part were performed in the summer, and were printed in 1594 and 1595 respectively under the titles of *The Contention of the Houses of York and Lancaster* and *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York*. These appear in the Folio as the Second and Third Parts of *King Henry VI.*, with revisions and corrections of sufficient extent to show that Shakespeare regarded the original as mainly his work. It is probable that for some reason unknown the authors of the First Part were cashiered, and that Shakespeare was employed to carry on their work in conjunction with coadjutors identified on slight evidence with Peele and Marlowe. That Greene was one of the discarded playwrights is almost proved by an attack upon Shakespeare in a pamphlet published by him shortly before his death in September 1592, invaluable as the first literary notice of Shakespeare we possess, and an involuntary testimony to the position he had attained.

Addressing three dramatic writers of the day, unnamed, but conjectured to be Peele, Lodge, and Marlowe (who, however, can hardly have been one of them if it be true that passages in the pamphlet relating to him were retrenched as unfit for publication), Greene dissuades them from writing for the stage on the ground that the actors have turned dramatists, and manufacture plays for themselves. "Base-minded men, all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned; for unto none of you like me sought those burrs to cleave; those puppets, I mean, who speak from our mouths, those anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they have all been beholding; is it not like that you, to whom they have all been beholding, shall (were ye in that case that I am now) by both of them at once forsaken? Yes, trust them not; for there is an upstart crow, beautified in our feathers, that, with his tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you, and, being an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. O that I might intreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses, and let those apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions." The "tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide" is a parody of a line in the Third Part of *Henry VI.*, showing clearly where the sore lay. As Shakespeare does not appear to have revised the First Part of *Henry VI.* further than by a few insertions of effective lines, it would seem that Greene, probably one of its authors, had designed to continue it, and felt indignant at his work having been put into the hands of another, especially of one whom he regarded as an interloper transgressing the legitimate limits of his own profession. The character of Shakespeare as a "*Johannes Factotum*" attests his versatility, and the commanding position he was gaining as manager no less than as author. Greene's attack was published by Chettle, who made an apology before the end of the year. "I am as sorry," he says, "as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his [Shakespeare's] demeanour to be no less civil than he is excellent in the quality he professes, besides divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approves his art." As "facetious grace" can only refer to comedy, it should seem that the continuation of *Henry VI.* was not regarded by Chettle as principally Shakespeare's work, and that *Romeo and Juliet* had not yet appeared upon the stage.

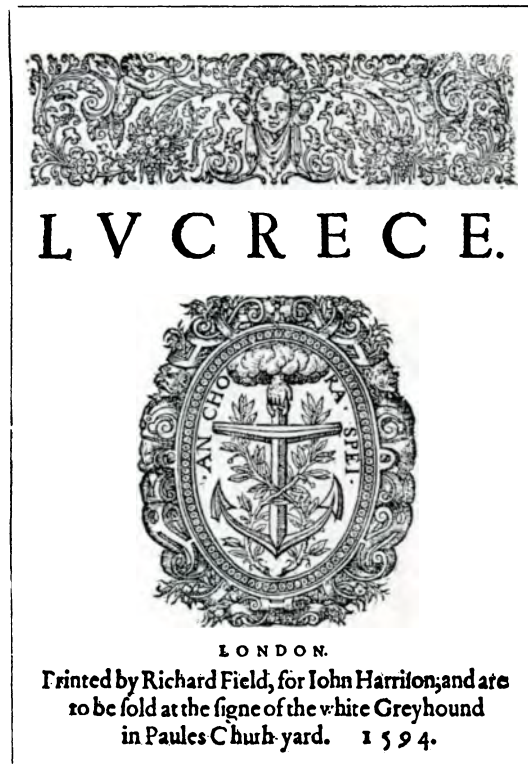
The parts of *Henry VI.* belong to an imperfect form of drama peculiar to England, "the chronicle play, in which the annals of a reign or period were thrown into a series of loose and irregular metrical scenes." The creation of the historical tragedy is due not to Shakespeare but to Marlowe, who may have been stimulated by the success of *Henry VI.* to show how such tragedies should be written. His *Edward II.* was entered on the Stationers' Register in July 1593, immediately after his death, and printed in 1594. If acted in his lifetime, it must have been performed before February 1593, when the theatres were closed on account of the Plague.

*Chronicle  
plays and  
tragedies*

It unquestionably had a strong influence upon Shakespeare's *Richard II.*, probably written in 1593 or 1594, while *Richard III.*, without doubt slightly anterior in date, bespeaks the general influence of Marlowe. The vigour of this stirring play, and the great opportunities which it affords to the actor, have made it one of the most generally known of Shakespeare's productions. The higher intellectual quality of *Richard II.*, evinced in the subtle delineation of the character of Richard,

by turns gentle and impassioned, impulsive and introspective, but always deeply pathetic, passed almost unobserved until Coleridge brought it to light. In one piece the playwright is predominant, in the other the poet. Shakespeare's character of Richard II. is a piece of divination; he has seen deeper than the chroniclers, and given us a different Richard from theirs, but a truer one. In *Richard III.* he follows the received account, and makes Richard appear to himself precisely as he appeared to his adversaries. The contrast with his maturer art in *Macbeth* is instructive.

The year 1593 afforded Shakespeare a respite from the cares of management, the London theatres being closed throughout the whole of it on account of the Plague. His company may very



Title-page of "Lucrece," 1594 quarto

"Venus and Adonis" and "Tarquin and Lucrece"

probably have visited the provinces, but even so he would have more leisure than usual. It is characteristic of his mental activity in these days that he should have betaken himself to poetry, for it can hardly be doubted that *Tarquin and Lucrece* was composed between the licensing for publication of his earlier poem, *Venus and Adonis*, in April 1593 and its own licensing in May 1594. Both these poems were dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, a youth of twenty, handsome, accomplished, literary, the patron of many poets of his day, but far above all of Shakespeare. The interesting questions raised by the two dedications, and the style of the poems in general, will be best considered along with the *Sonnets*. Shakespeare would have further poetical occupation if he wrote or rewrote *Romeo and Juliet*, which, from the Nurse's allusion to the interval elapsed since the great earthquake, has been thought

to have been begun as early as 1591, but must belong in the main to a more advanced period, while the pervading spirit of youth and the frequency of far-fetched conceits forbid us to place it later than 1593 or 1594, under which latter year we shall consider it.

It is an objection to the belief that Shakespeare embraced the profession of an actor immediately upon leaving Stratford, that in that case the atmosphere of the theatre would have allured his first efforts towards the drama. He tells

us, however, that "the first heir of his invention" was a poem, the date of which may be fixed with some confidence. The indebtedness of *Venus and Adonis* to Lodge's *Glaucus and Scilla* proves that it cannot have been written before the publication of that poem in the autumn of 1589, while the discrepancy of its style and versification from its successor, *The Rape of Lucrece*, compels us to separate it as far as possible. We may therefore assign it to the beginning of 1590, when Shakespeare had as yet written no plays. *Titus Andronicus* might have seemed to invalidate this observation so long as it passed for an early drama, but although pre-Shakespearean in spirit, it was



Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton

*After the portrait by Mircvelt*

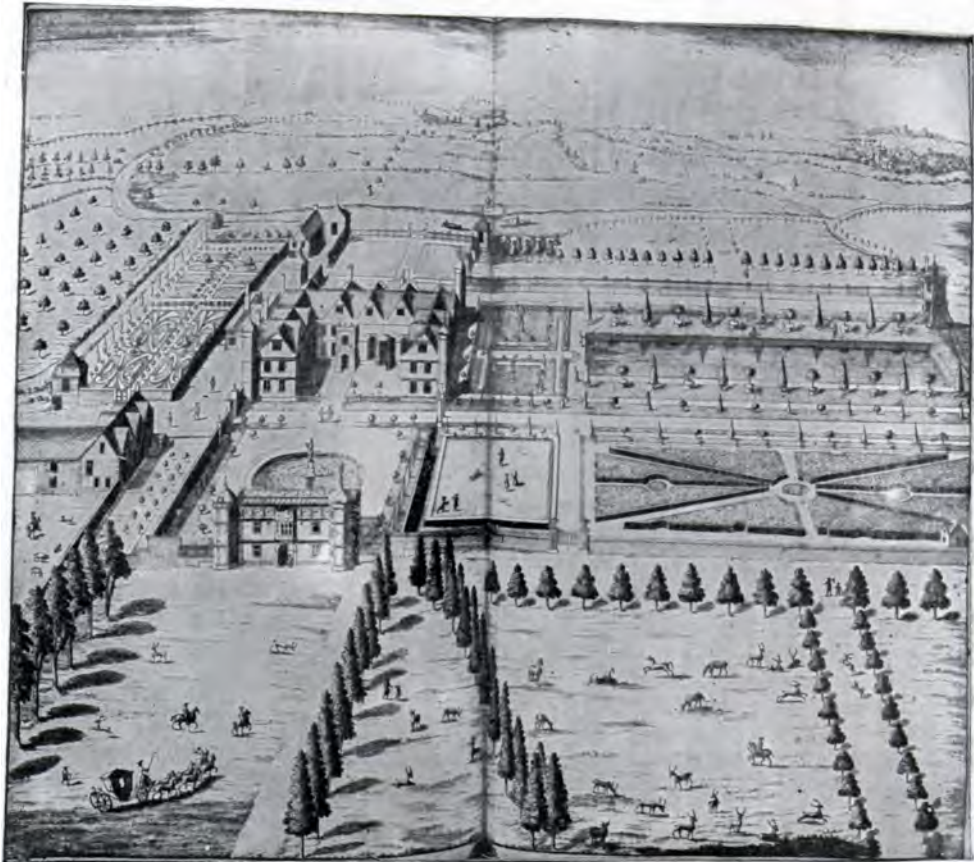
probably founded upon *Titus and Vespasian*, a play produced in April 1592, and was acted as a new play in January 1594, when Shakespeare would have been incapable of work so exaggerated and inartistic. The external evidence for his authorship, nevertheless, is so strong as to constrain the belief that he had enough of a finger in Andronicus's pie when (having, probably, been kept in abeyance by the closing of the theatres) it was served up to the public as "a new piece," to mislead the judicious Meres into attributing it to him. We are even disposed to think that his share may be discriminated. The conclusion of the fifth act contains two lines which occur with little alteration in Shakespeare's acknowledged writings :



Do shameful execution on herself.

But soft, methinks I do digress too much.

*Shakespeare's share in "Titus Andronicus"* The scene, moreover, though devoid of any unquestionable token of Shakespeare's hand, is throughout noble and dignified, and contains nothing unworthy of him. We suspect, therefore, that the play left unfinished by



**Charlecote House and Park in the Eighteenth Century**

*From Dugdale's "Antiquities of Warwickshire," 1730*

the original writer, or provided with but a "lame and impotent conclusion," was completed by Shakespeare. This would account for the ascription of the drama to him, and agrees with the tradition of his slight participation in it. One is tempted to fancy it a posthumous and unfinished work of Marlowe's. It is hardly more extravagant than *The Jew of Malta*; the scorn which Aaron pours upon religion is very Marlowe-like, and so is his simile of Tamora :

As when the golden sun salutes the morn,  
And, having gilt the ocean with his beams,  
Gallops the Zodiac in his glistening coach,  
And overlooks the highest peering hill.

Other choice passages would be worthy of Shakespeare himself, but the style differs :

Fresh tears  
Stood on her cheeks, as doth the honey-dew  
Upon a gathered lily almost withered.

My lovely Aaron, wherefore look'st thou sad  
When everything doth make a gleeful boast ?  
The birds chant melody in every bush ;  
The snake lies rolléd in the cheerful sun ;  
The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind,  
And make a chequered shadow on the ground :  
Under their sweet shade, Aaron, let us sit.

King, be thy thoughts imperious, like thy name.  
Is the sun dimmed, that gnats do fly in it ?  
The eagle suffers little birds to sing,  
And is not careful what they mean thereby,  
Knowing that with the shadow of his wing  
He can at pleasure stint their melody :  
Even so may'st thou the giddy men of Rome.

We have seen from Chettle's mention of Shakespeare that *Romeo and Juliet* had probably not been acted up to December 1592, and it could not be brought out in 1593 owing to the closing of the theatres. If, therefore, our view of its date is correct, it would be likely to appear upon the stage soon after *Titus Andronicus*. It is needless to say much of a play which has become a household word in every language, but its epoch-making character in many respects may be briefly pointed out. It is the first play in which we meet a true Shakespearean woman, one of those divine creations in which, without having encountered them elsewhere, we devoutly believe, because their perfection in no way oversteps the modesty of nature. Each has her own sphere, within which she is perfect ; from another point of view it might be otherwise, but this is never allowed. Juliet's especial grace is the reconciliation of girlish innocence with fiery passion, a difficult feat indeed, but perfectly accomplished. No parents ever blamed Juliet for what they would find highly objectionable in their own daughters. This is the first of Shakespeare's long series of triumphs as a creator of female characters. Julia and Silvia have been charming indeed, but of quite another mould. The play also marks Shakespeare's first great success in comic character apart from plot and situation : Mercutio, a pattern of the more refined department of the art ; the Nurse, of the more broadly humorous. If the composition preceded that of *Richard II.*, it also for the first time (if we except Clarence's dream in *Richard III.*) shows his faculty of adorning his dialogue by extraneous poetry. Romeo's description of the Apothecary, and Mercutio's of Queen Mab, might stand by themselves as beautiful poems. The latter may be deemed a precursor of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which we shall assume to have been Shakespeare's next play.

The first performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is referred with great probability to December 1594 or January 1595 in virtue of the cumulative

force of two lines of evidence, neither conclusive by itself. The piece has much appearance of having been composed upon occasion of a marriage, and in both December and January occurred the wedding of a person of rank which may well have been thus celebrated. The very minute description of the phenomena of an ungenial summer has all the air of being derived from a recent instance; and the summer of 1594 had been cold and wet beyond precedent. These arguments would not greatly avail if the date were unlikely on critical grounds, but no period in Shakespeare's life fits so well with the degree of artistic and psychological development requisite for the production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His power of delineating character and his imagination had still to grow; his fancy had reached its *plus ultra*. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* he for the first time shows his astonish-



David Garrick and Mrs. Bellamy in "Romeo and Juliet"

ing power of creating unhuman beings whose works and ways are human in their rationality. Dante and Milton have attempted the same, but in making their fiends reasonable they have made them men. Cardinal Newman and Christina Rossetti in our own day have approached much more nearly to Shakespeare, but they can only exhibit their demons and goblins by glimpses, and a certain taint of the supernatural clings to

them. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*, and, it may be added, in Goethe's Mephistopheles, there is nothing really supernatural, the exceptional personages are merely beings abnormal from our experience, living under a law of their own. The union in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* of three elements so dissimilar as this fairy world, the humours of Bottom and his fellows, and the dignified refinement of Theseus and his court, renders it almost the most delightful of Shakespeare's plays.

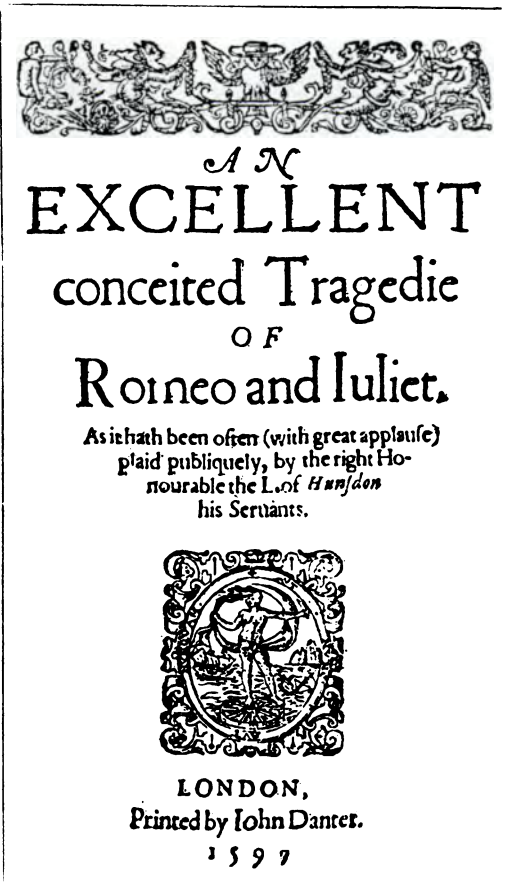
"*King John*" Critics have almost unanimously fixed the date of *King John* at from 1594 to 1596. We feel little doubt that it was produced in the summer of 1595. It is manifestly a celebration of Elizabeth's successful defence of her kingdom against Pope and Spaniard, heightened by contrast with the failure of John, and combined with an earnest appeal to the writer's countrymen for patriotic service in the face of pressing danger. This danger can be nothing but the Spanish invasion, the dread of which kept the whole kingdom astir through the greater part of 1595, when the Spaniards actually did effect a landing in Cornwall, and the scene thus vividly depicted was of daily occurrence:

I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus  
The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,  
With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news,  
Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,  
Standing on slippers—which his nimble haste  
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet—  
Told of a many thousand warlike French  
That were embattailed and ranked in Kent.

Composed in haste to meet an emergency, *King John* misses many occasions for effective dramatic presentation. More might have been made of the character of John. On the other hand, the play gains in spirit and fire. All its strong points are very strong. Constance is the type of the mother whose world revolves solely upon her son, made selfish and aggressive, and eventually driven to frenzy by the pride and passion of maternal love. Faulconbridge is the ideal John Bull. Arthur's situation is surpassed in pathos by no other in Shakespeare, unless Lear's. The haste with which Shakespeare worked is shown by his dependence on the old drama which afforded him his framework, although he borrows none of its diction; and his alterations evince consummate judgment. One, the omission of a farcical scene offensive to the Church of Rome, has, notwithstanding the obvious tendency of his play, been made an argument to prove him a

Roman Catholic. If his good taste is not sufficient reason, it is possible to allege another, prosaic but conclusive. Shakespeare was not the man to quarrel either with his friend or his bread and butter, and his friend and patron, Southampton, was a Roman Catholic at that time.

*All's Well that Ends Well* and *The Taming of the Shrew* are usually referred to 1595 as an approximate period, but it appears to us that they must have come later. It is commonly believed, and with good reason, that one or the other must have been a later version of the play termed by Meres in 1598 *Love's Labour's Won*. If this version had appeared before 1598 Meres would



Title-page of "Romeo and Juliet," 1597 quarto



surely have mentioned it by its new title; if neither is identical with *Love's Labour's Won*, Meres does not mention either. There is much in both plays suggestive of a later date, and traces of an earlier origin are easily explained by the circumstances that *All's Well that Ends Well* is probably a reconstruction of one of Shakespeare's first pieces, and that *The Taming of the Shrew* is founded upon an anonymous play produced in 1594.

"*The Merchant of Venice*"



Edward Alleyn, the Actor

*After the portrait at Dulwich College*

The following year, 1596, is the most likely date for *The Merchant of Venice*, unless Mr. Lee's identification of it with the *Venetian Comedy* acted in 1594 (but not by Shakespeare's company) should be established. The first mention of it is by Meres in 1598. It is needless to dwell upon a play so universally known; nor is it possible sufficiently to praise the enthralling interest of the main action, the art with which the spectator is carried triumphantly over a series of the grossest improbabilities, only remarked in the study, and the deep humanity of Shakespeare's conception of the Jew, too kindred to ourselves ever to forfeit our sympathy, vindictive murderer in intention though he be. Marlowe's Barabas is at hand to show into what a pit a less gifted dramatist and a less genial nature might have fallen.

*Shakespeare's relations with his family*

We have no particulars respecting Shakespeare's private life during this period, except the patronage of Southampton and his summons to act before the Queen in December 1594. The investigations of his biographers have shown that as actor and dramatist he must have enjoyed a considerable income. He cannot, however, have done anything for his father up to at least December 1592, when, in the records of Stratford, John Shakespeare's habitual absence from church, which had led to his being proceeded against as a recusant, is accounted for by his unwillingness to leave home for fear of process for debt. Shakespeare, nevertheless, was so little of a niggard that in 1598 a townsman, Richard Quiney, is found confidently applying to him for a loan of thirty pounds in a sudden strait. It can only be concluded that what seemed an irreparable breach between Shakespeare and his family had been occasioned by the circumstances under which he left Stratford. After 1595,

however, nothing more is heard of the elder Shakespeare's lawsuits and pecuniary troubles, and in October 1596 he is found incurring expense and asserting a higher position than he had previously enjoyed by an application for a coat of arms, which he did not then obtain, but which three years afterwards was discovered to have always belonged to him. This can only have been at the instigation of his son, which implies a thorough reconciliation, and the provision of moneys for urgent occasions. Mr. Lee refers Shakespeare's revisitation of Stratford to

1596, and a most probable motive both for the return and the reconciliation is afforded by the death of his son Hamnet in the August of that year. If so, the story of the Prodigal Son would be reversed, and the little domestic drama between the fortunate but repentant son, the decayed parents to whom he was bringing help and comfort, the faded and long-forsaken wife, and the girls growing up with no know-



**New Place, Stratford-on-Avon, showing the Guild Hall and Chapel and a corner of the Falcon Inn**

*From Wheeler's "History of Stratford-on-Avon," 1806*

ledge of their father, or trained in disesteem for him, would be as pathetic as any scene in his own works. There would be much to forget and forgive on all sides, but Shakespeare's full acceptance of the situation is shown by the important step he took next year in buying New Place, the largest house in Stratford, for which he gave sixty pounds, or between four and five hundred in our present currency, and which must have involved considerable additional expense in furniture and repairs. A tradition, unauthenticated, but intrinsically probable, of Southampton having assisted him to make a purchase on which he had set his heart, may have reference to this transaction. His desire to obtain a good position in his native county is further evinced by a suit, nominally instituted by his father, to regain the alienated property which had belonged to his mother. It led to no result.

The time has now arrived to consider the question of the *Sonnets*, in some respects the most interesting of Shakespeare's writings, as they tell us most about himself. The reader need not be informed that it is one of extreme difficulty, to which justice cannot be rendered in our space. Meres, in 1598, names among Shakespeare's works his "sugared sonnets among his private friends." In 1609, Thomas Thorpe, a bookseller, published the collection as we now have it, with a dedication to "Mr. W. H.," whom he describes as "the only begetter" of the pieces, and to whom he wishes "the immortality promised by our ever-living poet." "Begetter" obviously cannot here mean "author," and until lately has been universally considered to mean

*The "Sonnets"*

"subject." Mr. Sidney Lee, however, has recently contended that it means "procurer," and interprets it of the person by whose instrumentality the *Sonnets* were obtained for publication, whom he plausibly identifies with a certain William Hall. "Begetter" may be used in this sense, but that this is not its signification here is shown by the circumstance that the "begetter" has the poet's, not the publisher's, promise of immortality, no fiction of Thorpe's, but made repeatedly in the *Sonnets* themselves. Granted that the appropriation involving the publication, of the MS. of the *Sonnets* was a laudable action, deserving undying fame, how could Shakespeare, writing between 1590 and 1600,



**Macklin and Miss Pope as Shylock and Portia  
in "The Merchant of Venice"**

foreknow that Mr. William Hall would entitle himself to this renown in 1609? Nothing, to our apprehension, can be clearer than that, since "begetter" cannot denote the writer, it denotes the cause and subject of the poems, the person for whom and upon whom they were written, and but for whom they would not have been written at all; the person to whom Shakespeare made that promise which Thorpe is now about to enable him to redeem. For the identification of "Mr. W. H." we have no other clue than the internal evidence of the *Sonnets* themselves. Five circumstances appear incontestable: that he was a very young man; that he was greatly Shakespeare's superior in rank;<sup>1</sup> that he was a patron of poets, and himself en-

dowed with literary accomplishments; that he was of attractive personal appearance; that his friends greatly desired him to marry. It further appears to us that, with the exception of the group evidently addressed to a woman, all or nearly all were addressed to the same person—a conclusion established, in our opinion, by the prevalent unity of tone, and by the consideration that, had they been inscribed to a number of different persons, no one could have brought them together but Shakespeare himself. In this case they must have been published with his sanction, and he would never have allowed the misdescription of "Mr. W. H." as their "only begetter." Most of the circumstances above named concur in two persons, Henry Wriothesley, Earl of South-

<sup>1</sup> This has been made an objection to the identification of the subject of the *Sonnets* with "Mr. W. H.," it being contended that a person of title would not be addressed as "Mr." Certainly not, if his identity was to be disclosed; but if concealment was desired, such additional disguise would be natural. And if concealment was not intended, why use initials at all?



ampton (born 1573), Shakespeare's especial patron, and William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke (born 1580), "the greatest Mæcenas to learned men of any peer of his time." The initials "W. H." would serve equally well for either, for, if Southampton were the man, they might well have been transposed for the sake of disguise. It seems almost impossible to doubt that either



**William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke**

*After an engraving of the portrait by D. Mytens*

Southampton or Pembroke is indicated when the poet addresses his friend as one who has reason to rejoice at the death of Elizabeth. Both lay under her displeasure: Southampton was in prison, Pembroke banished from Court:

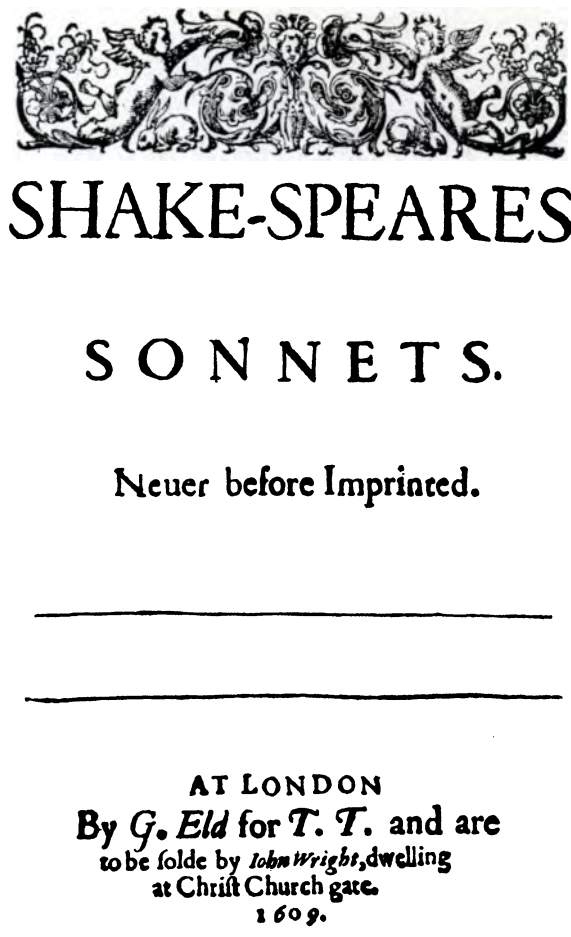
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,  
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;  
Incertainties now crown themselves assured,  
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.  
Now with the drops of this most balmy time  
My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,

Since, spite of him I'll live in this poor rhyme,  
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes.  
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,  
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

*Sonnet on the  
death of Eliza-  
beth.*

The "mortal moon" is evidently Elizabeth, the Cynthia of the poets of her day. That the

"eclipse" is permanent appears from the reference to her successor in the next quatrain. The presages of the augurs are the doubts and fears of statesmen respecting the unfixed succession; the "incertainties" that so significantly *crown* themselves relate to the accession of James; and the "olives of endless age" are a compliment to his pacific policy, which soon brought about peace with Spain. In Elizabeth's time there had been neither peace nor the prospect of it. It seems marvellous that there should have been any question about what is so absolutely transparent. A slighter circumstance not devoid of weight may be pointed out. Elizabeth died on March 24. The "drops of this most balmy time" indicate that the sonnet was written in April. Southampton was



Title-page of the "Sonnets," 1609

liberated from the Tower on April 10, and Pembroke made haste to return to Court. "James," says Mr. Lee, "came to England in a springtide of rarely rivalled clemency, which was reckoned of the happiest augury." We may therefore feel sure that Shakespeare's sonnet is a felicitation to a friend on the new reign, and no possible person but Southampton or Pembroke has been suggested.

*Southampton's  
claim.*

The sonnet would certainly appear to fit the imprisoned Southampton better than the merely disgraced Pembroke, though it would suit either. There are, nevertheless, serious objections to the identification of Southampton

with the subject of the poems. It is an almost fatal impediment to his claim that there is no record of his having been urged to marry, except at seventeen, which would correspond to 1590, an impossible date for the *Sonnets*. After 1594 there could be no question, at least no question raised by an intimate friend, of his marrying any one but Elizabeth Vernon, with whom he had an amour, and the poet's arguments are not of the kind that could be used to persuade a man to marry his mistress. The entire tone of the *Sonnets*, indeed, is so inconsistent with the probable relations of Shakespeare and Southampton after 1594 that the advocates of the Southampton theory are obliged to assign to them a date too early for their reach of thought and poetical power. Even thus a formidable difficulty arises. There is a remarkable difference between the tone of the dedications of the two poems inscribed by Shakespeare to Southampton. The formality of the dedication of *Venus and Adonis* (1593) is inconsistent with the feeling displayed in the *Sonnets*, with which the warmth of the dedication of *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) would accord very well. It is therefore maintained that the majority of the *Sonnets* were composed in 1594; but it seems impossible that either so much could be written in so short a time, or so much variety of psychological experience lived through. Shakespeare, moreover, says (Sonnet CIV.) that he had first seen his friend three years previously, and implies, though he does not expressly state, that their attachment had kept pace with their acquaintance. If it had been formed in 1591, the formality of the dedication of 1593 remains unexplained. Sonnet LV., moreover, apparently alludes to a passage in Meres's *Palladis Tamia*, in which case it must be later than September 1598, when Meres's book was registered for publication.

No such difficulties beset Pembroke, whose friends were in August 1597 most desirous to marry him to a grand-daughter of the all-powerful Burleigh. It must be supposed that Shakespeare became acquainted with his friend, whoever he was, at the time when marriage was being pressed upon him, for the stream of thought in the *Sonnets*, beginning with half-earnest conceits and gaining volume and intensity as it proceeds, shows the order to be mainly chronological, and the note of marriage is struck in the very first line :

From fairest creatures we desire increase.



Mrs. Abington as Beatrice in "*Much Ado About Nothing*"

Pembroke's  
claim.

As has been stated, this pressure was put upon Pembroke in August, and was, no doubt, continued for some time. Shakespeare appears to say that his acquaintance with his friend commenced at the beginning of winter, for he puts the fall of the leaf first among the natural phenomena which succeeded it :

Three winters cold  
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride ;  
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned  
In process of the seasons have I seen ;  
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned  
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.

*Indications  
of dates.*

In Sonnet xcvi. he deplores his absence from his friend in the autumn, and in Sonnet xcvi. another absence in April. If these sonnets were



Elliston as Falstaff in Henry IV.

addressed to Southampton in 1594, Southampton must have been absent from town in the spring and autumn, but of this there is no evidence, and it would reduce the time available for the composition of the *Sonnets*, upon this theory too short already. But we have positive proof of the absence of Pembroke at both these seasons—in September 1599, when he was called into the country by the illness of his father, and in April 1601, when he was imprisoned for his transgression with Mistress Fitton; though we do not press this latter circumstance, as Shakespeare himself appears to have been the absentee. One further indication may be given of the *Sonnets* not having been composed earlier than 1597. In Sonnet lxxvi. Shakespeare, among the miseries that make him wish for death, enumerates “ Art made tongue-tied by Authority.” What art ?

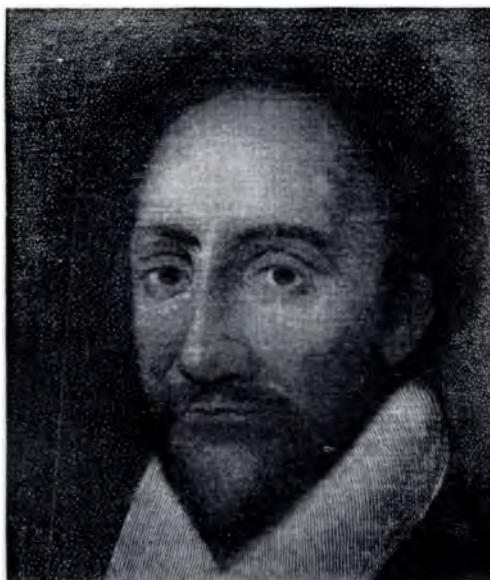
Clearly his own, Poetry, especially dramatic poetry. Painting, Sculpture, and Music are evidently out of the question. In 1597 there had been two interferences of Authority with this art which must have touched Shakespeare very nearly. In August 1597 a brother dramatist, Thomas Nash, was visited with a long imprisonment for political allusions in a play entitled *The Isle of Dogs*, and Henslowe's theatre was closed for a time. In the same year Shakespeare's own *Richard II.* had to be printed without the deposition scene, which must be supposed to have been omitted from the performance also. The special occasion which extorted the complaint in the sonnet may have been the destruction of Marlowe's translation of Ovid's *Amores*, and of Marston's *Pygmalion*, by order of the Archbishop in 1599.

*General  
conclusion.*

We, therefore, conclude that, while the *Sonnets* were certainly addressed for the most part either to Southampton or to Pembroke—and Southampton is not entirely out of the question—the evidence derived from dates and the



general character of the poems greatly preponderates in Pembroke's favour. All will allow their superiority to the narrative poems in intellectual maturity as well as in poetical expression. The lower their date can be reasonably carried the better. We do not doubt that most are posterior to 1597, while probably none can be dated after 1603. It may be added that the general tone of address is more appropriate to a stripling like Herbert, as yet only heir to a peerage, than to Southampton, who, although a youth, had for years been a peer of the realm. It is unlikely that Shakespeare would have termed his patron "fair friend" and "sweet boy." Some difficulties, no doubt, remain. There is no direct proof of any connection between Herbert and Shakespeare, nor does he appear to have been remarkably handsome, as Southampton was. But if the prosperity of a jest lies in the ear that hears it, so may that of a countenance in the eye that beholds it. The "dark lady" group of sonnets (CXXVII-CLII). relates to some critical circumstance in Shakespeare's life, of which we know no more than that it must have occurred before 1599, when two of them were printed. We do not think that the man referred to in them is the same person as the subject of the other sonnets; if he were, this would be an argument for Pembroke, as his christian-name was evidently William. Sonnet CXLV., which is not a sonnet, is entirely out of place.



Richard Burbage

*After the portrait at Dulwich, attributed to himself*

We have left ourselves no space to comment upon the poetical merit of the *Sonnets*, nor is it needful. While some, no doubt, are mere exercises of ingenuity, many more in depth of emotion and splendour of imagery surpass any kindred compositions in the language. That there should have been a time when they were slighted and contemned seems now like a bad dream. This was the eighteenth century, but in Shakespeare's own age they were far from enjoying the esteem accorded to his narrative poems, which ran through edition after edition, and in the eyes of most, eclipsed even his plays. It is as the epical, not the dramatic poet that he is celebrated upon his monument. To our age these poems appear very admirable as galleries of glowing pictures, and not devoid of striking thoughts, but tedious from over-elaboration, and strangely deficient in pathos, the moving nature of the themes considered. This is probably owing to the deliberate matter-of-fact way in which the poet goes about his task, upon which Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Dowden

*Shakespeare's  
epical poems.*



have commented. The *Sonnets*, so long neglected, have in our own day called forth more criticism and speculation than any other of Shakespeare's works, except *Hamlet*. The comments of Professor Dowden, Mr. George Wyndham, and Mr. Thomas Tyler are most valuable, though we cannot subscribe to the last-named writer's views on the minor detail of Mistress Fitton.

"*Henry IV.*" The purchase of New Place, the outward and visible sign of Shakespeare's victory over the world, aptly ushers in the most sunny and genial, though not the most marvellous epoch of his dramatic production. The *First Part of Henry IV.*, licensed for the press in February 1598, must have been written and acted in 1597. The Second Part and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, satellite of the historical dramas, cannot have been long delayed. There are perhaps none



Mrs. Woffington as Mrs. Ford in "*The Merry Wives of Windsor*"

of his productions in which Shakespeare is so thoroughly at home, and from which so lively an impression may be derived; not, indeed, of the man in his profounder moods, but of the man as he appeared to his fellows. If critics are right, as no doubt they are, in recognising in *Hamlet* and *Troilus* the influence of a period of gloom and sadness, the creation of Falstaff must denote one of genial jollity, such as might well be induced by the victory in the battle of life signalised by his installation in his native town. In full keeping with this feeling is the fact that the second part contains many local allusions, including a reference to a peculiar agricultural custom in the Cotswolds, alone sufficient to prove that the play was written by one acquainted with the locality. The serious portion of the plot is but moderately inter-

esting, but it is handled with an easy power which would excite still more admiration if it were not so completely overtopped by the humour of Falstaff. There seems no doubt that Falstaff was originally called Oldcastle, from which it has been absurdly argued that Shakespeare intended to attack the Reformation. If he had had any such design he would have made Falstaff a Puritan.

"*Henry V.*" *Henry V.* is in some respects a more extraordinary production than *Henry IV.*, for it shows what Shakespeare could make of a subject so undramatic that it might well have been deemed intractable. The date and purpose of the play are proclaimed by itself in the speech of the Chorus celebrating Essex's expedition to Ireland in the early part of 1599. It must be regarded, like *King John*, as a dramatic improvisation designed to animate and guide public feeling. *King John* has a highly dramatic subject, *Henry V.* is better adapted for epic. Its tone, therefore, is lofty and epical, befitting the grandeur of the momentous, if undramatic, action, and it is sown

with passages of majestic eloquence and brilliant poetry, while the comic personages, our old acquaintances, retain their original humour. The dissolute Prince Hal has become the ideal of a warrior king, and, designedly or undesignedly, affords no inapt symbol of Shakespeare's own transformation from the youth "given to all unluckiness" into the first burgess of his native place and the first author of his age.

Shortly after the broad humour of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare passes to a totally different type of comedy, the poetical and romantic. Perhaps no department of his work was so absolutely congenial to him, for none so entirely reconciled the graver and the lighter qualities of his mind. In beginning his career as a dramatist, he had turned to it as it were by instinct, for one of his earliest works, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, is an example of it, and one of extraordinary merit considering his age. He now, in the prime of his strength, produces three masterpieces, *Much Ado about Nothing*

(1598 or 1599), *As You Like It* (1599 or 1600), and *Twelfth Night* (1600). Of these, *Much Ado about Nothing* is the least delightful, shadowed by the villainy of Don John and the unchivalrous behaviour of Claudio; but Benedick, Beatrice, and Dogberry make amends. *As You Like It* is the most thoroughly delightful play that Shakespeare ever wrote, and Rosalind perhaps deserves the palm among all his female creations. The Forest of Arden is as purely an ideal world as that of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* or *The Tempest*, and owes nothing of its ideality to the supernatural. It is perhaps the most remarkable instance that poetry affords of an ideal creation out of purely human elements. If *Twelfth Night* is less enchanting, it is merely because the Illyrian city cannot have the romantic charm of the forest, nor can Viola reproduce the unique flavour of Rosalind, nor can she have a foil



Poetical and  
Romantic  
Comedy

Richard Tarleton, a comedy actor of Elizabeth's time  
From an old print

in Celia. But if less exceptional, the character is not less exquisite, and touches the feelings more deeply; the subordinate personages are even more humorous; and the action is balanced with the nicest skill on the limits between gay and grave. It is remarkable that among the materials for his plot Shakespeare takes up the Spanish romance from which he had derived *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and uses the part which he had then rejected.

*Shakespeare  
at the close of  
the century*

The cheerful character of Shakespeare's dramatic work towards the close of the century was promoted not merely by his restitution to Stratford, but by the general prosperity of his affairs. In 1599 the brothers Burbage built the Globe Theatre in Bankside, and allotted shares in the receipts to some of the more distinguished performers, among whom Shakespeare is mentioned. The amount he would probably receive, including his salary as actor, has been estimated at £500 in the money of the period, out of which he would have to contribute his share towards the expenses of the theatre. Remuneration for his dramatic writings and extra emoluments from performances at Court and at private mansions would increase his income, which may be fairly estimated at £600 a year. His was one of the natures with which prosperity agrees, and we may see thankfulness and satisfaction reflected in his work. This complacency, nevertheless, was mainly the creation of outward circumstances. It was not yet based upon philosophy allied to experience, and resulting in that large, liberal, tolerant view of life of which his latest writings show him in possession. Ere this could be his, he had yet, to all appearance, to traverse a tempestuous inward crisis. Meanwhile the century, for him, closed in peace.

## CHAPTER VI

### SHAKESPEARE—(continued)

IF the sixteenth century had closed brightly for Shakespeare, the seventeenth began in cloud and storm. His own position may not have been affected, but he must have suffered deeply with his patron and his friend. We have seen him celebrating Essex's Irish expedition in *Henry V.*, and promising that the hero should return, "bearing rebellion broached upon his sword." Things had turned out far otherwise. Falling from one disaster to another, Essex, in February 1601, was goaded into the mad attempt at revolution which brought him to the scaffold, and his ally Southampton, Shakespeare's friend and Mæcenas, to the Tower. In the same month, Pembroke, the subject, as we have contended, of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, incurred, like Raleigh before him, the Queen's displeasure by an intrigue with a maid of honour. He was imprisoned and banished the Court. It has already been remarked that the month of his imprisonment corresponds with the month of April during which Shakespeare laments his severance from his friend. We are nevertheless not disposed to connect the circumstances, as Shakespeare seems to write as one who has himself been absent in the country. The date of the absence may with probability be conjectured from the first four lines of Sonnet xcvi. :

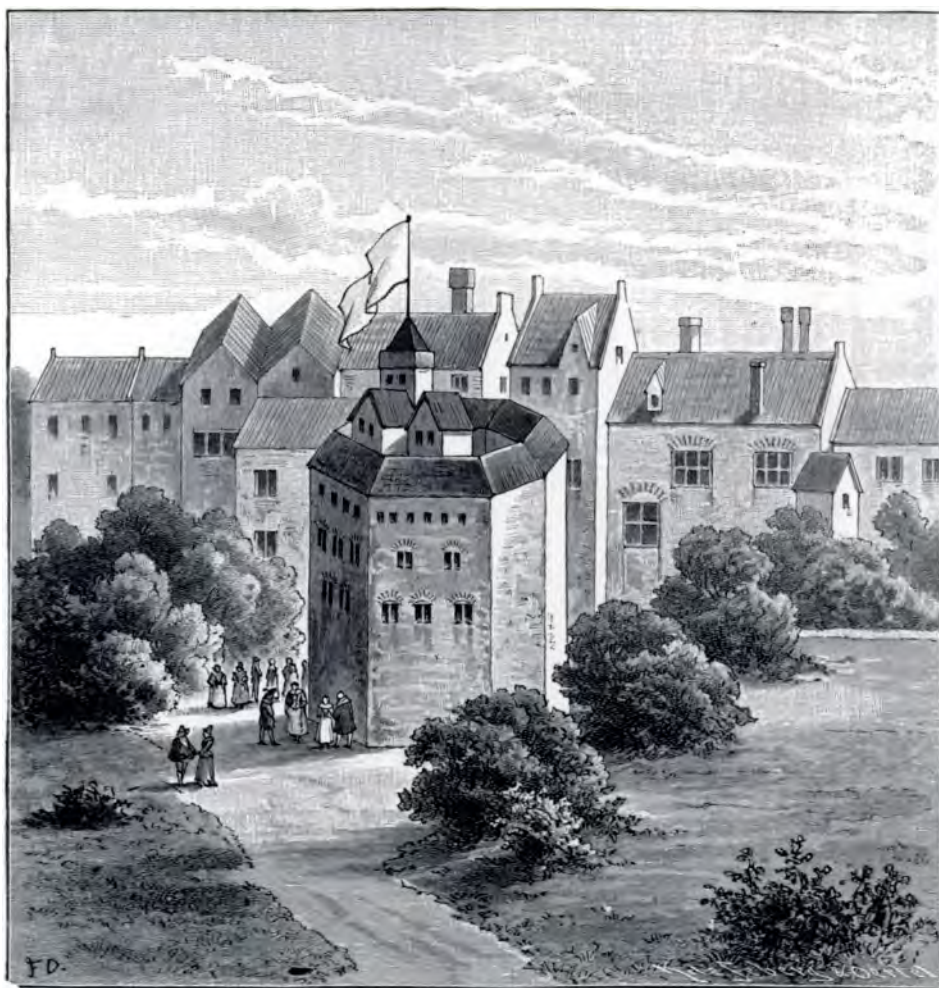
*Shakespeare  
at beginning  
of seventeenth  
century*

From you have I been absent in the spring,  
When proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim,  
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,  
That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with him.

Saturn may be merely a poetical synonym for Time; but if, as is more probable, the planet Saturn is denoted, he certainly is not introduced at random. Mr. George Wyndham has most ingeniously surmised a reference to the peculiar brilliancy of Saturn when in opposition to the sun, and thus at his greatest possible distance. The sun in April is in Aries and Taurus, and to be in opposition to him Saturn must be in Libra or Scorpio, as actually was the case at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. This acute observation may be reinforced by another derived from the kindred study of astrology. Libra is astrologically the *exaltation* of Saturn, one of the signs in which he is supposed to be most potent. He may therefore with great propriety be said to "laugh and leap" in it. He was in Libra and opposed to the sun in the April of 1599 and 1600. The latter date would agree best with the general chronological scheme of the *Sonnets*.

"*Julius  
Cæsar*"

It is an interesting speculation whether the conspiracy of Essex contributed to direct Shakespeare's attention to the conspiracy of Brutus as the subject of his next play. There can be little doubt that *Julius Cæsar* appeared in 1601, for it is alluded to in Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs*, published in that year, and it seems out of keeping with the plays of 1599-1600. Professor



**The Globe Theatre at Southwark**

*From a drawing in the British Museum*

Dowden has pointed out its intellectual affinity to *Hamlet*, a drama of the succeeding year. In resorting to Plutarch for a subject, Shakespeare was merely repeating the procedure with the English chroniclers which had answered so well in his English historical plays, but he had now to deal with material already sifted by a masterly hand. It was not the especial business of the English chroniclers to record noble actions: they relate the history of the times with fidelity, and take things noble or ignoble as they come.



But Plutarch's *Lives* are eclectic; his aim is to preserve what is really memorable in a strictly human point of view, and in so doing he gives it so admirable a form that Shakespeare himself cannot improve upon it. Many, therefore, of the most striking traits and sayings in *Julius Cæsar* are taken directly from his biographies of Cæsar and Brutus. Referring back from the poet to the biographer, we find continually how what has most impressed and charmed us belongs to Plutarch. An inferior writer would have attempted to heighten or refine upon his original. Shakespeare never alters what he knows cannot be improved. Where, however, he sees his opportunity, he fairly carries Plutarch away in his talons. The finest scenes in the play, scenes which Shakespeare himself never surpassed—the oratory and tumult at the funeral of Cæsar and the dispute between Brutus and Cassius—are developed from the merest hints. With exquisite judgment, these grand displays of eloquence and passion are reserved for the part of the play that requires them. The first half, full of incident and character, needs no embellishment; but after Cæsar's death the interest would flag but for these potent reinforcements. In another respect Shakespeare is very dependent upon Plutarch—the delineation of character. He has not to do here with rude faint outlines, like the traditional Macbeth or the traditional Lear, but with portraits painted after authentic history by the hand of a master. These

T H E  
Tragicall Historie of  
HAMLET  
*Prince of Denmarke*

By William Shake-speare.

As it hath beene diuerſe times acted by his Highneſſe ſer-  
uants in the Cittie of London : as alſo in the two V-  
niuerſities of Cambridge and Oxford, and eſſe-where



At London printed for N.L. and Iohn Trundell.  
1603.

Title-page of the First Quarto of "Hamlet"

*From the only extant copy, in the library of the Duke of Devon-  
shire at Chatsworth. (Reproduced from Mr. Sidney  
Lee's "Life of Shakespeare" by permission of  
Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.)*



he follows religiously. It hence comes to pass that in the character of Brutus he has made a nearer approach than anywhere else to drawing a perfect man, for Plutarch will have it so. "In all Brutus's life," says Plutarch, after recording one undeniable blot, "there is but this one fault to be found," and Shakespeare's Brutus is equally perfect ethically, save for his requiring Cassius's prompting to do what he should have resolved upon by himself. Professor Dowden justly points out the analogy with Hamlet. The very perfection of Brutus's moral nature renders him inefficient intellectually; he cannot condescend to the sphere of an unscrupulous man of the world like Antony, and Antony beats him from the field. This, of course, is also in Plutarch, but Plutarch does not show, as Shakespeare does, the necessary connection of Brutus's moral nobility with his intellectual failings. The other personages are depicted as in Plutarch, but with much greater vividness. The subordination of Cæsar's part has been censured, but appears inevitable. Had Cæsar been a more prominent character he must have been represented in personal relation to Brutus, inimical or benevolent. If the former, suspicion must have been cast upon the disinterestedness of Brutus's patriotism; if the latter, he would have been open to the charge of ingratitude.

*Shakespeare  
and Plutarch*

There is an interesting indication that Shakespeare read other lives of Plutarch than those he dramatised, and even before he had written *Julius Cæsar*. Cæsar says to Antony, wishing to elicit his opinion of Cassius:

Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,  
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.

Cæsar is nowhere represented as deaf, but the idea seems borrowed from Plutarch's statement, in his life of Alexander the Great, that Alexander "always used to lay his hand upon one of his ears to keep that clean from the matter of accusation."

On the whole, save for defects inherent in the subject, *Julius Cæsar* is perhaps as perfect a work as the dramatist's art is capable of producing. That perfection and power are not convertible terms appears from the undeniable fact that Shakespeare's next production, though imperfect in structure and full of puzzling riddles, has affected mankind far more deeply and exhibits qualities far more exceptional. This play is *Hamlet*.

The stage history of *Hamlet* is remarkable. It is entered on the Stationers' Register in 1602 as a piece lately acted. In 1603 a quarto edition appeared containing not more than about three-fifths of the play as republished in the following year. In the earlier edition Polonius is called Corambis, and there are many discrepancies in language and in the arrangement of scenes and speeches. It is a highly interesting question whether the first edition was printed after an imperfect or an acting copy, or possibly taken down in shorthand during the performance, or whether Shakespeare himself revised and enlarged his drama. The former seems the more probable supposition; although even the second edition, described as "printed from the only true

which a ghost appeared crying "Revenge!" The theme may well have been suggested by the English actors lately returned from Copenhagen, and, perhaps, were the play now extant, the origin of Shakespeare's remarkable acquaintance with the topography of Elsinore might be ascertained. It has been attributed with much probability to Thomas Kyd. It was acted again in 1594, and must have been well known to Shakespeare, who, no doubt, took from it the idea of Hamlet



The Tragickall Historie of  
H A M L E T  
Prince of Denmarke.

Enter two Centinels. { now call'd Bernardo  
+ Francisco —

1. Stand: who is that?

2. **STIS. I.**

1. O you come most carefully vpon your watch,

2. And if you meete *Marcellus* and *Horatio*,

**The partners of my watch, bid them make haste.**

I. I will : See who goes there.

*Enter Horatio and Marcellus.*

*Hor.* Friends to this ground.

*Mar.* And I begotten to the Dane,  
O farewell honest souldier, who hath releued you?

I. *Barnardo* hath my place, giue you good night.

Mar. Holla, Barnardo.

2. Say, is *Horatio* there?

*Hor.* A peece of him.

2. Welcome *Horatio*, welcome good *Marcellus*.

2. Welcome Florio, welcome good  
Mar. What hath this thing appear'd againe to night.

2. I have seen nothing.

2. I have leene nothing.  
*Mar. Horatio sayes tis but our fantasie,*

Mar. Horatio layes us out our tammans,  
And wil not let belife take hold of him,  
Touching this dreaded fight twice seene by vs,

**B**

**There-**

The opening page of the First Quarto of "Hamlet"

*From the copy (wanting the title-page) in the British Museum*

*The old play  
of "Hamlet".*

as a dramatic subject. It would be of service to him by bringing together the Hamlet legend as related by Saxo Grammaticus and the version of it in the novel of Belleforest. Apart from this, we cannot believe that he adapted it, or that any considerable trace of it would be found in his work. It may even be that he has unkindly burlesqued his predecessor in the Player's bombastic speech about "the rugged Pyrrhus": but Hamlet's apology for the lukewarmness of Polonius's appreciation suggests that Marlowe, the declared adversary of "jigging veins," was the butt of the parody.

*Exceptional  
character of  
"Hamlet"*



Fechter as Hamlet

*Hamlet* is Shakespeare's most wonderful play, and the most famous, but, regarded as a drama, it is not the best. The action is loose and inartistic, there is no logical sequence in the incidents; the moral might almost seem to be that life is a chance medley, and that the high resolve of the avenger and the sagacious plotting of the usurper are alike at the mercy of trivial accidents. Given the situation and the character of an Othello or a Macbeth, we foresee the issue, but no reader or spectator of *Hamlet* for the first time could tell whether Hamlet's vengeance was to be accomplished or not. It seems as though Shakespeare, having written so much for Art's sake, determined at last to write something for his own, and made *Hamlet*, as Goethe made *Wilhelm Meister*,

a vessel into which he could put his views and observations of men and things. It is noteworthy that it is much the longest of his plays; that in no other, unless *The Tempest* be an exception, does a single character so completely dominate the action; and that nowhere is such an amount of speaking imposed upon a leading personage. These are, no doubt, among the chief sources of its popularity, to which may be added the wonderful perfection of individual scenes considered by themselves; the truth and depth of the characters, not one of which but has some strong and original trait; above all, the sense of mystery, vagueness, and the gazing, as it were, upon a vast and remote horizon. In fact, *Hamlet* is more nearly akin to *Faust* than to Shakespeare's other tragedies, and the main idea, so well pointed out by Goethe, of a noble and tender spirit sinking beneath the load of a duty which it cannot perform, is almost buried in the multitude of minor issues. The question of Hamlet's madness has been much debated. We feel no doubt

that it is real, though never amounting to lunacy, and that the actual taint of insanity in his mind makes the simulation of it much the easier to him. It is one of the finest points of dramatic irony in the play that the deception, as he deems it, by aid of which he desires to compass his revenge, is turned against himself when his uncle, with perfect justification, as must have seemed to all, makes it the ostensible reason for banishing him. There is much of the cunning of the madman in his trick upon Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, which a sane man would not have carried to such length, as it would have sufficed to destroy the letter.

The unsatisfactory nature of human life as by no means an established article of Shakespeare's creed. For some years after the performance of *Hamlet* we find him composing under the influence of more serious feeling than of old, producing tragedy by preference, but if comedy, comedy devoid of the brightness and lightness of heart that has characterised his comedy until now. But in only one piece after *Hamlet* is the view presented of human life as a whole thoroughly pessimistic. Tragic incidents are se-

lected for treatment, but human nature and human society are never, save once, represented as rotten at the core. This one exception is the play which there is good reason to believe next followed *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida*. Some circumstance must certainly have been at work to derange the inner harmony of Shakespeare's being, and as the heroine of his new play is the byword for female inconstancy, the presumption is very strong that this was connected with the passion of love. It would be natural to interpret it by the history of the Dark Lady adumbrated in the second

"*Troilus and Cressida*"

THE  
Tragicall Historie of  
HAMLET,  
*Prince of Denmarke.*

By William Shakespeare.

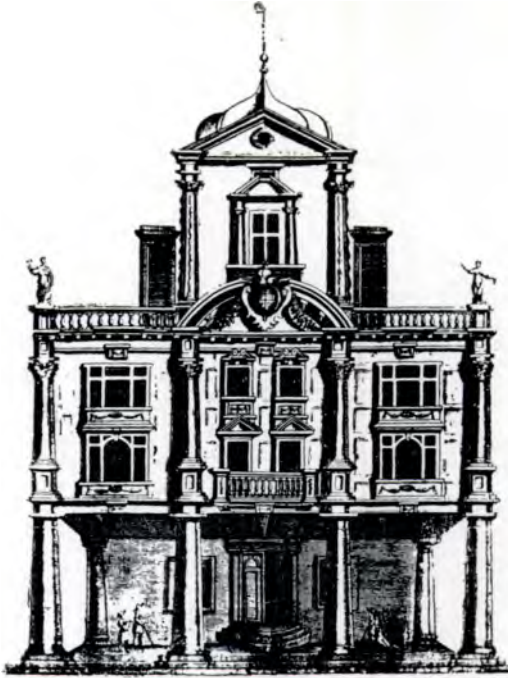
Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much  
again as it was, according to the true and perfect  
Copie.



AT LONDON,  
Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be sold at his  
shoppe vnder Saint Dunstons Church in  
Fleetstreet. 1605.

Title-page of the 1605 "Hamlet"

series of the *Sonnets*; but this is out of the question, for two of them had been published in Jaggard's *Passionate Pilgrim* as early as 1599. If connected with any episode in the *Sonnets*, it is most probably with the incidents, whatever they may have been, which led him in Sonnet CXIX. to speak of his love as "ruined," even if "built anew." As these sonnets evidently belong to the latest group of those addressed to his friend, 1602 would be a very probable date, and there is strong reason to believe that this was the year in which *Troilus and Cressida* was written. The literary history of the



The Duke's Theatre, Dorset Gardens

From Wilkinson's "Londinia Illustrata," 1819

play, however, is as perplexing as the play itself. In 1599 Dekker and Chettle wrote a drama on the subject, with which a contemporary satirist seems to have imagined that Shakespeare had some concern. In February 1603 a piratical publisher obtains a licence to print "the book of *Troilus and Cressida* as it is acted by my Lord Chamberlain's men," Shakespeare's company. When, however, the play is at length printed by another publisher about February 1609, it is stated never to have been performed, while other copies of the same edition declare it to have been acted at the Globe. The simplest way of reconciling these conflicting statements is to suppose that the play had not, in fact, been acted when the publication was first licensed, but that the licensee, knowing that it was in preparation, took the liberty to anticipate

pate; that some cause, possibly the death of Elizabeth, prevented its production; that the statement made early in 1609 that it had never been represented was true at the time, but had to be retracted when the play was actually brought out. In any case, the evidence of diction and versification speaks for 1602-3.

*Satirical  
character of  
"Troilus and  
Cressida"*

In *Troilus and Cressida*, even more than in *Hamlet*, Shakespeare has set himself to exhibit "the seamy side of things." In *Hamlet* the repulsiveness is almost cancelled by the splendour of the poetry, the depth of the problems suggested, and the surpassing interest of the principal character. In *Troilus and Cressida* there is nothing of this. Shakespeare disdains the magnificent materials which lay to his hand, and seems to take pleasure in degrading his theme, in compelling us to view the amorous idyll of the Trojan pair with the eyes of Pandarus, and the Grecian heroes with the eyes of





COPY FROM ORIGINAL PORTRAIT OF SHAKESPEARE IN OILS, 1609,  
*accepted as the portrait engraved by Droeshout for the 1623 Folio.*





Thersites. Cressida, of whom he could have made so much in happier mood, is simply a light woman, inconstant, sensual, frivolous. Taken in connection with the generally melancholy character of his poetical work at this time of his life, this may well be deemed the expression of a sick and sore heart, scornful of some English Cressida unknown to us, more scornful still of himself as a dupe,

Shamed through all his nature to have loved so slight a thing,

and summing up his view of the sex in general in Diomedes's withering denunciation of Helen :

*Paris.* Who, in your thoughts, merits fair Helen best,  
Myself or Menelaus ?

*Diomedes.* Both alike :  
He merits well to have her, that doth seek her,  
Not making any scruple of her soilure,  
With such a hell of pain and world of charge ;  
And you as well to keep her, that defend her,  
Not palating the taste of her dishonour.

Having thus delivered himself, Diomedes goes away, and

Neither looks upon the heaven nor earth,  
But gives all gaze and bent of amorous view  
On the fair Cressid.

A supreme piece of dramatic irony. Viewed as a satire, *Troilus and Cressida* is one of the most interesting of Shakespeare's works ; as a play it is straggling and ineffective. Its beauties are for the closet, not for the stage. It is full of insight into human nature and civil and political wisdom, especially in the marvellous speeches of Ulysses. That beginning "Troy, yet upon her basis, had been own" bears a striking resemblance to the sublime passage on Natural Law quoted in our account of Hooker. Yet the general impression is confused and enigmatical. Shakespeare might have applied to himself the lines which he puts into the mouth of Achilles :

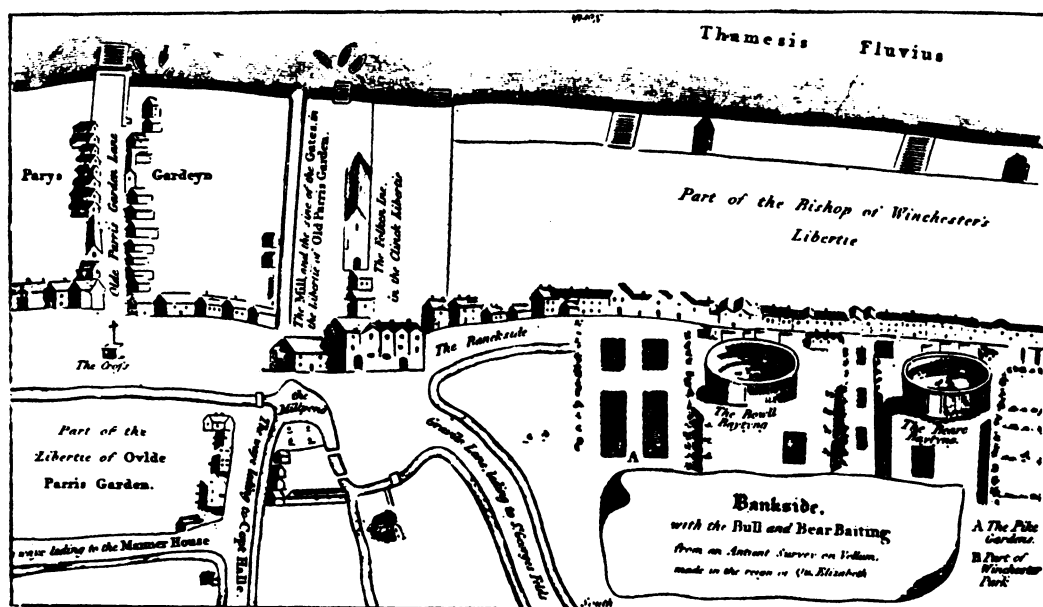
My mind is troubled, like a fountain stirred ;  
And I myself see not the bottom of it.

There is no reason to connect *Troilus and Cressida* with any literary feud, or with any intention of parodying the *Iliad*. Shakespeare ignores Homer, and follows the mediæval romances. Rossetti's magnificent picture of Cassandra is taken from Act V. Scene 3, and he has even improved upon the original by introducing Paris and Helen. The Prologue, Epilogue, and last speech of Pandarus are probably spurious.

If Shakespeare's mind was at this time shrouded in gloom, his external fortunes went on brightening. The accession of James in March 1603 gave him a more munificent patron than Elizabeth, and restored his disgraced friends to liberty and honour. Southampton was released, Pembroke welcomed back to Court ; both were gratified with distinctions and employments. The absence of any funeral tribute to Elizabeth from Shakespeare's pen is thus susceptible of easy explanation. Elizabeth had not been an

*Shakespeare's  
a James I*

unkind mistress to him; Ben Jonson tells us that she admired his works, and the tradition that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written at her command, true or false, implies as much. But there is no trace of any confidential relation between them, or of his pen having been ever employed by her for any political purpose. It was otherwise with the new sovereign. We shall find evidence of Shakespeare's pen being exerted four times in James's interest. There is some slight reason for thinking that his company may have visited Scotland before James's accession, when he could not have failed to gain the King's acquaintance and favour. However this may be, Shakespeare's especial connection with Southampton must have made him an adherent of Essex, whom James regarded as the steadiest advocate of his accession to



Plan of the Bankside, Southwark, in Shakespeare's time, showing the Bull- and Bear-baiting Gardens, the Falcon Inn, &c.

From an old plan in the British Museum

the English throne. Honours fell thick and fast on the Essex party, and the players were not forgotten. On May 19, 1603, Shakespeare's company, heretofore described as "the Lord Chamberlain's men," received full recognition and valuable privileges. They henceforth became known as "the King's Servants," and ranked officially with the Grooms of the Chamber. Shakespeare's plays were henceforth frequently acted at Court; between November 1604 and February 1605 his company performed before the King no less than eleven times. Upon James's solemn entry into London in March 1604, the players formed a part of the procession, vested in scarlet cloth bestowed on them for the occasion. These circumstances seem irreconcilable with the theory that Shakespeare's depression at this period of his life was due to mortification at a decline in public favour.

Shakespeare's public connection with the drama was nevertheless interrupted in 1603 by an outbreak of the plague, which put a stop to dramatic performances in London. Having now a country residence, he would, no doubt, retire to it, and would be able to spend a considerably longer time there than the pressure of the theatrical profession could previously have allowed. These circumstances may probably be connected with the production of one of his plays, *The Taming of the Shrew*. This piece, like the old play (1594) from which it is adapted, is preceded by an Induction, setting forth the merry gest of the tinker, Christopher Sly. Shakespeare's version contains local allusions to the neighbourhood of Stratford which, as Halliwell-Phillipps suggests, seem out of place if the play were not intended for representation there. The piece cannot be placed earlier than 1599, not being in Meres's list, nor could it have existed in its present form until Shakespeare had obtained a residence at Stratford. Not more than half of it is from his pen, and it seems tolerably certain that it was hastily put together for performance on some especial occasion, which Fleay reasonably supposes to have occurred in 1603, when he would have most time at his command, and when his company, banished from London by the plague, might probably be touring in the neighbourhood. The old play was entitled "The Taming of a Shrew." It bears no trace of Shakespeare's hand. The under-plot of Bianca and Lucentio, probably written by some coadjutor, is borrowed from Ariosto's comedy of *I Suppositi*, which Gascoigne had translated. "To Shakespeare," says Mr. Grant White, "belong the re-cast Induction and all the scenes in which Katharine and Petruchio and Grumio are the prominent figures, together with the general effect produced by scattering lines and words and phrases."



Edmund Malone

A celebrated editor and commentator  
of Shakespeare

After the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

If this merry little comedy, thus improvised for the amusement of Shakespeare's neighbours, was produced at the period to which we have ascribed it, it was but a gleam irradiating the general sombreness of his dramatic production at the time. It was probably about this period that "the solemn comedy," as Mr. Lee appropriately terms it, *All's Well that Ends Well*, assumed definite shape. This play is generally identified with that mentioned by Meres under the title of *Love's Labour's Won*, which corresponds excellently to the nature of the action. It would be naturally supposed that

a play with this title would be produced soon after the appearance of *Love's Labour's Lost*; but, although there are some traces of archaism, the general style seems incompatible with so early a date; there also seems to be an allusion to *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, a play probably produced in 1600; and Brandes ably shows the affinity of many passages to passages in *Hamlet*.



The stage of the Red Bull Playhouse, Clerkenwell

From Kirkman's "*The Wits; or, Sport upon Sport*," 1673

The most probable conclusion would seem to be that Shakespeare thoroughly rewrote his early work; and in our opinion this was done at some period not very remote from the composition of *Measure for Measure*, which was certainly in 1603 or 1604. The pieces resemble each other in a want of geniality, strongly contrasting with Shakespeare's earlier productions; and their chief female characters, upon whom everything depends, belong to a type rare among his women, the heroine rather made to be admired than to be loved. Helena and Isabella command our sympathies to the full; the devotion of Helena to the unworthy object of her affections is womanly as well as fine, but we hardly feel at ease with them. The other personages are for the most part either contemptible or uninteresting. The love of the noble Helena for Bertram would be hard to

understand if reason could be supposed to have anything to do with the matter; and Shakespeare's geniality has deserted him in dealing with Parolles, though the comedy lacking to the character is abundantly extracted from the situation. Of the genuine Shakespearean comedy, except for the ludicrous situation of the luckless Lucio in *Measure for Measure*, there is little trace in either; and neither has ever been a favourite, though *Measure for Measure*, notwithstanding the needless offensiveness of the low-comedy scenes, takes a high place among Shakespeare's works by the veneration

claimed by the character of Isabella and the depth and pregnancy of the moral lesson taught by the fall of Angelo. The character of the Duke has much affinity to that of James I., and it cannot be doubted that the object of the piece was partly political. James had been kept out of his capital for ten months by the plague, was unknown to most of the citizens, and had been censured for want of accessibility. The Duke in *Measure for Measure* exhibits the wise sovereign temporarily withdrawn from the observation of his subjects, but acquainted in his retirement with all that passes, and reappearing at the proper moment to terminate a business whose intricacy has misled even an Escalus, but the clue to which has always been in his own hands.



Liston as Pompey in "Measure for Measure"

In the usual chronology of Shakespeare's plays, *Othello* would appear under 1604. There is a reason, as will appear farther on,



Cooke as Iago in "Othello"

for placing this drama after Shakespeare's retirement to Stratford; and this,

be it worth much or little, is confirmed by one of the most important of the metrical tests. Though not prolific of light and weak endings, *Othello* has nearly the same proportion of double-endings as those undoubted productions of his later period, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Cymbeline*. If 1604 be really the correct date, it is remarkable that there should be no trace of the existence of so powerful and popular a tragedy until 1609, when a child is christened Desdemona. The alleged record of a Court performance in 1605 is a forgery; on the other hand, the assertion of Malone that he had seen evidence for the date of 1604 which satisfied him is entitled to great weight. If, notwithstanding, we are disposed to bring the accepted date a few years

*Probable date of "Othello"*



that of *Measure for Measure*, of which this date would make *Othello* a near neighbour. It would seem as though, in writing *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, Shakespeare had purified his own mind by pity and terror. In these dramas the two chief instruments of the tragic poet, according to Aristotle, are wielded by Shakespeare with a grandeur surpassing that which he has displayed anywhere else; and the years 1605 and 1606, to which they respectively belong, may be marked as the culminating period of his power, though not of his art. He is, indeed, favoured by his subjects. The tragedy of *Lear* is not more intense than the tragedy of *Othello*, but it is more exceptional. Groundless jealousy is not an uncommon incident in life, but the ingratitude of Lear's daughters is something absolutely preternatural, and properly accompanied



David Garrick as King Lear

by the portents of storm and tempest which the poet's imagination has conjured up. "The heavens themselves show forth the deaths of princes." Such material sublimity would have been out of place in the domestic tragedy of *Othello*. "The sensation experienced by the reader of *King Lear*," Professor Dowden justly says, "resembles that produced by some grand natural phenomenon." Next to the impression of sublimity

comes that of intense compassion. Lear is the tragedy of helpless old age. From the moment when, yielding to the testiness and waywardness so ordinary with old men, he commits the irretrievable error of his life, to that when he says, "Pray you, undo this button," his thoughts and deeds are those common to humanity in its decline, but represented amid awful environments on a colossal scale. Of the place of Cordelia among Shakespeare's heroines it is needless to speak.

If Lear stands on the pinnacle of pity, *Macbeth* occupies the pinnacle of terror. No one, the boyish Keats thought, could venture to read it alone at two o'clock in the morning. Yet the pathos is hardly inferior to the terror. It does not consist in the murder of Duncan, piteous as this is; "the ordinance of death is blown in every wind," but

It is not a common chance  
That takes away a noble mind.

The true tragedy is the depravation of such a mind in *Macbeth*, a man by nature most amiable, a poet in the charm of his language and the delicacy of his sensations, but yielding beneath the influence of a stronger nature,

*Lear and  
Macbeth*

and unsupported by steadiness of principle. When he has once given admission to the suggestion that it is possible "to win wrongly" without "playing false," his doom is sealed, and the temptings of the weird sisters merely accelerate it. Lady Macbeth is the true evil genius of her husband, and the peculiar pathos of her situation is that for so long she has no suspicion of it. She loves him so well that her love even survives what to her coarser apprehension seems his childish and cowardly scruple. When she perceives the abyss into which she has led him she breaks down, as revealed in the sleep-walking scene, perhaps the highest achievement in all dramatic poetry for the union of pity and terror. The Witches exalt the piece by providing a supernatural

background, precipitate a tragedy which would have taken place without them, and incite to the further crime of the murder of Banquo. The ease with which the naturally virtuous Macbeth, having once imbrued his hands in blood, is wrought up to this foul deed, is one of the most striking moral lessons in Shakespeare. The speech of Hecate is probably an interpolation. Other passages, such as the second scene of the first act, can hardly have come from Shakespeare's pen, and the comparative brevity of the piece, with some apparent

disproportion in the length of the scenes, has led to the suspicion that it has been systematically reduced to acting proportions by some meddling playwright. There are, indeed, a few indications of retrenchment, but in our opinion this curtness is sufficiently accounted for by the obvious fact that Shakespeare must have had a Court representation of his piece in his mind from the moment that he began to plan it. He was manifestly guided to his subject by the desire to celebrate the accession of James and the consequent union of the English and Scottish crowns, the most important political event of his time. It would have been idle for him to have so laboured if the play had never been seen by him whom it was designed to honour. He must therefore have contemplated a Court representation from the first, and it had doubtless been impressed upon his mind by much mortifying experience, that a Court play must not be too long. The like cause produced the like effect when he wrote *The Tempest*, the only other play, unless the tradition respecting *The Merry Wives of Windsor* can be credited, which he composed with



Mrs. Cibber as Cordelia in "King Lear"

the Court mainly in his eye. The result was not unfortunate. "Shakespeare has employed in the treatment of this subject," says Brandes, "a style that suits it, vehement to violence, compressed to congestion, eminently fitted to express and to show terror." The question whether *Macbeth* was not withheld from the public stage for some time after its Court representation will be considered in another place.

We are now approaching an important era in Shakespeare's life, his re-establishment in his native town. He had ever since 1597 been in possession of the best house in Stratford, and his wife and daughters no doubt habitually dwelt in it, but, so long as he continued to be an actor, his own residences must have been occasional. He had clearly been occasional. He had clearly been occasional.

*Shakespeare's  
retirement  
from the  
stage*



Macready as Macbeth

purchased it with the view of making it his home when circumstances should allow, and he must have been eager to carry this purpose into effect, especially as he appears to have had no great vocation for the stage. How well he understood the performer's art theoretically the directions to the players in *Hamlet* evince, and his dramas in general display a consummate knowledge of dramatic effect. But sound theory does not necessarily imply successful practice, and the minor part of the Ghost is the only one which tradition has identified with his name. Apart from this, he has recorded his distaste for the theatrical calling in lines of tragic earnestness, which alone refute the Baconian theory of the authorship of the *Sonnets*:

O for my sake do you with Fortune chide,  
The guilty goddess of my harmful  
deeds,



Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth



That did not better for my life provide  
 Than public means, which public manners breeds.  
 Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,  
 And almost thence my nature is subdued  
 To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.  
 Pity me then, and wish I were renewed.

Shakespeare's annual emolument as an actor has been computed at £180, *His settlement at Stratford* or about a third of his probable total income from the Globe Theatre. He had two residences to keep up, and his father having died in September 1601, leaving little if any property beside two houses in Henley Street, he was probably now the sole support of his mother. He would therefore be cautious



**The Swan Theatre on the Bankside**  
*From a drawing in the British Museum*

about quitting the actor's profession, little as he loved it. The precise time of his emancipation cannot be determined, but may well have been not very remote from his contemptuous mention of the poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage.

A very likely date would be the spring or summer of 1607, in the June of which year his eldest daughter Susanna married Dr. John Hall, a physician of Stratford, and quitted New Place for her husband's house. This would leave Mrs. Shakespeare alone in the house with her second daughter. It may have become necessary that Shakespeare should live more at Stratford; the marriage of his daughter would certainly bring him there, and the conjecture that his residence then became permanent is at all events very plausible. Another motive might be the probably declining health of his aged mother,

who died in the following year. So long as he continued to write plays he would, no doubt, be obliged to reside much in London. We may feel confident, however, that the more he accustomed himself to a country life the more he would be captivated by it, and the brighter and more cheerful character of his dramatic productions after the probable date of his settlement at Stratford may be traced in large measure to its wholesome influences. This settlement will be found to be connected with a peculiarity indisputably apparent in his later work, which will be best explained if considered along with one of the best authenticated of the Stratford traditions respecting him.

*Stratford  
tradition  
respecting  
Shakespeare*



Quick as Launce in "Two Gentlemen of Verona"

*From a drawing by Ramberg*

Between 1661 and 1663 the Rev. John Ward, Vicar of Stratford, recorded in a memorandum-book that Shakespeare, after he had taken up his residence there, regularly supplied the London theatre with two plays a year. He must have heard the story in his parish less than fifty years after the death of Shakespeare, and nothing can be more intrinsically probable than the existence of some such contract between Shakespeare and his partners in the Globe. If, nevertheless, the tradition proves at variance with any known facts, it ought to be rejected, but it is, on the contrary, entirely in harmony with a remarkable phenomenon attending Shakespeare's later dramatic work. This is his constant endeavour to diminish the labour of composition. In every play known with certainty to have belonged to his later period, *A Winter's Tale* alone excepted, recourse is

had to some device tending to save trouble to the author. In *Troilus and Cressida* he revives a former play. *The Tempest* is the shortest of his dramas. In *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra* he leans upon Plutarch. *Pericles* and *Timon* are largely, *Cymbeline* perhaps to some extent, by other hands. In *Henry VIII.* he collaborates with Fletcher. While this slackness is fully in harmony with the circumstances of his residence at Stratford, the alleged contract would explain why his productiveness should still be so considerable. The obligation would pull both ways. Its fulfilment would sometimes be irksome, but would always be necessary. The natural resource would be the employment of any device by which the dramatist's labour might be diminished without lowering the standard of his art. The labour-saving tendency, at all events, is undeniable, and the obligation to produce two plays a year with or without the goodwill of Minerva affords as plausible a way of accounting for it as can be conceived.

It must be inquired, however, whether it is possible so to allot Shakespeare's



work during the last years of his dramatic activity as to justify the assertion of his having for several years regularly provided the theatre with two plays annually? This cannot be said unless the composition or, which would serve equally well, the first public representation of two plays can be brought lower than the generally accepted date. There are only two possible instances, *Othello* and *Macbeth*. Of *Othello* we have spoken. The versification of this play indicates a later period than that of *Lear* or *Macbeth*, and nearly that of *Antony and Cleopatra*. The absence of any trace of it until 1609—perhaps even 1610, when a performance was witnessed by a German prince on his travels in England—is remarkable in the case of a drama not only of transcendent merit, but admirably qualified for popularity. On the other side are two doubtful pieces of external evidence: Malone's statement that he knew it to have been performed in 1604, and the forged entry of its performance at Court in 1605, which *may* have been transcribed from a genuine entry. Decision is difficult.



The Falcon Tavern

Believed to have been frequented by Shakespeare and his companions

From Wilkinson's "*Londinia Illustrata*," 1819

The question relating to *Macbeth* is curious. The evidence for the date of 1605 or 1606 seems satisfactory, but was there a public representation at that time? The brevity of the play, and the pointed compliments to James I., show that it was intended for performance at Court. This by no means excludes public representation, but would public representation be then permitted? The Gunpowder Plot had just exploded, and the air was full of treasons and conspiracies. Might not the representation of the murder of a King of Scotland have been thought unseemly and dangerous? The question would hardly have suggested itself but for the fact that in April 1610 the play is a new one to Dr. Simon Forman, a regular playgoer, who describes a performance of it in his diary with a minuteness proving that he had never seen it before, and suggesting that he had never heard of it. None of Shakespeare's dramas is more likely to have been frequently acted; if it had really been a stock-play for four years unknown to Forman, his nescience is extraordinary. On the other hand, there is an apparent allusion to Banquo's ghost in *The Puritan*, a play printed in 1607: "the ghost in white at the head of the table." This seems strong evidence, but would Banquo have been exhibited in a white sheet? This would be contrary to the precedent of Hamlet's father, "in his habit as he lived," and would

Probable date  
of "*Macbeth*"

interfere with the recognition of Banquo by the spectators. He ought not, in fact, to be visible to them any more than to the guests; but, if visible, he should appear as they have known him, only bearing the tokens of violent death, "blood-boltered," in Macbeth's parlance.

If the admitted difficulties do not prevent the acceptance of the Vicar's intrinsically most probable statement, the chronology of Shakespeare's plays after his settlement at Stratford might be as follows:

*Chronological  
table*

- 1607. *Timon of Athens*; *Antony and Cleopatra*.
- 1608. *Pericles*; *Othello*.
- 1609. *Troilus and Cressida* (revival); *Cymbeline*.
- 1610. *Macbeth* (first public representation); *Coriolanus*.
- 1611. *Winter's Tale*; *Two Noble Kinsmen* (?)



Miss Yonge and Messrs. Dodd, Waldron, and  
Love in "*Twelfth Night*"

*Engraved by J. R. Smith after a picture by Wheatley*

It will be observed that the arrangement is in pairs, each year producing one complete work of Shakespeare's and one either revived or composed in collaboration with another writer. This is exactly the method likely to be adopted by one anxious to fulfil a burdensome obligation in the easiest way possible without prejudice to his genius and character. After 1611 Shakespeare ceases to write regularly for the stage, and probably disposes of his share in the Globe, which he did not hold at his death.

*The Tempest* and *Henry VIII.* were, as will be shown, produced on special occasions, and belong to 1613.

*"Timon of  
Athens"*

The evidence of style and versification, and the still stronger testimony of a moody and embittered spirit, constrain us to place *Timon of Athens* chronologically at the head of Shakespeare's later writings. It is, indeed, possible that it may be earlier in composition than 1607. *Timon's* affinity to *Lear* has been frequently remarked, and it may be that Shakespeare began to write it soon after the completion of that drama, and after making some progress with it, laid it aside until its production was required by theatrical exigencies. If he had by that time escaped from his period of gloom, he could not but disrelish his own work, and would be likely to commit to another the shaping of what he had rough-hewn. This is a more probable supposition than that he himself completed the work of an inferior dramatist, for in that

case he must have had the last word, and there are faults which he would hardly have been able to forbear correcting. The aid of a coadjutor is manifest, a writer not devoid of talent for the comic and serio-comic, but incapable of tragic dignity. The portions most evidently non-Shakespearean are Act I. from the entry of Apemantus to the end of the banquet; Act III., and Act V., after the last scene in which Timon appears. The genuine parts of the play are very fine, and in every way worthy of Shakespeare; the diction is frequently contorted, but so is Timon. Yet the play never could be popular, if only for want of a female character. Emile Augier has shown in his delightful comedy of *La Cigüe* how a similar theme may be effectively treated, but his vein of light raillery would be impossible to Shakespeare in his actual mood. A Lucianic element which may be detected is probably due to Shakespeare's acquaintance with Boiardo's comedy, *Timone*, which is mainly translated from Lucian. Shakespeare was beyond doubt fairly well versed in Italian.

The close relationship between *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, is shown by the circumstance that, though only *Pericles* was printed, both were entered for publication on the same day, May 20, 1608. Which was first written cannot be known; the probability is that some play entirely from Shakespeare's hand would intervene between two, like *Timon* and *Pericles*, produced with the help of collaborators. The question, however, is not material, for both show Shakespeare's restoration to a sane and cheerful view of

life. *Antony and Cleopatra* is pre-eminently the work of one interested in "the world's great business." Hardly anywhere else is there such bustle, such variety, such zest for political and military affairs. Shakespeare is thoroughly in charity with his principal characters. His treatment of Cleopatra is purely objective, there is no trace of personal resentment as in his portrait of Cressida. In Antony he has marvellously depicted "the average sensual man," on a far lower plane than a noble idealist like Brutus, but still capable of deep human feeling. This was shown in *Julius Cæsar*, by the great speeches beginning "O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth," and "This was the noblest Roman of them all." In *Antony and Cleopatra* this depth of feeling is entirely devoted to a woman; and so intense, especially under the influence of jealousy, so sincere, so single-minded, save for one vacillation under stress of politics, is it that we overlook the fact that we have before us an Antony in decay, no longer able to sway the Roman multitude or school Octavius. Wisdom and policy are gone for ever, even martial honour is dimmed,



Dunstall as Dromio in "The Comedy of Errors"

"Antony and Cleopatra"

but love makes amends for all. Such a picture necessarily implies a corresponding brilliancy in the portrait of Cleopatra, and it is needless to remark that she is perhaps the most wonderful of all Shakespeare's studies of female character. He follows Plutarch's delineation closely, but performs the same miracle upon it as Venus wrought upon the effigy of Galatea: a beautiful image becomes a living being. Perhaps the keynote of the personality is what Shakespeare terms "her infinite variety"; there is room in her for every phase of female character. The same amplitude characterises the play itself, with its great sweep in time and place, its continual changes of scene, its crowd of personages, its multitude of speeches and profusion of poetical imagery. The contrast with *Julius Cæsar* is instructive. There the interest is more

concentrated, the characterisation more minute, and the execution more laborious. The ease with which Shakespeare handles his theme in the later play, and the plasticity of the entire subject in his hands, manifest the perfection of his art by dint of practice, but impair the effectiveness of his piece on the stage. The actor has fewer grand opportunities than of yore, and although the drama is resplendent with poetical phrases, there are few sustained outbursts of passion or eloquence. The impersonation of Cleopatra, moreover, demands an actress of mature years. In Shakespeare's time there was no difficulty, for there were no actresses. The representation of his Cleopatra by a *boy* strikes us now as indescribably farcical.

What once seemed the knotty problem of *Pericles* has been satisfactorily resolved by modern criticism. The first two acts contain little or nothing of Shakespeare,



*Pericles*"

Mrs. Wells as Lavinia in  
"Titus Andronicus"

From a drawing by Ramberg

but the last three, except for Gower's verses, are entirely his, even the brothel scenes, as we agree with Brandes in considering. Saving for these scenes, which are essential to the story, these acts make a charming little drama, a pleasing forerunner of the later style of Shakespeare's romantic comedy. He probably took the subject out of incompetent hands, but it must remain a question whether he merely continued their work or replaced what they had written by new work of his own. The description of the storm at the beginning of the third act is finer than anything similar in *The Tempest*, and a proof that Shakespeare had "gone down to the sea in ships, and occupied his business in great waters." The character of the good physician Cerimon may adumbrate Dr. John Hall, just become a member of his family.



The end of the year 1608 seems to us, on the whole, the most probable date for *Othello*, though it is always dangerous to prefer an opinion based mainly upon internal evidence, in opposition to the weakest external testimony. The painfulness of the subject has led the play to be classed among the productions of Shakespeare's pessimistic period: but he might have taken up such a theme at any time, and it is difficult to see how his treatment could have been fundamentally different. It is true that in *Iago* he has drawn what he has drawn nowhere else, except in *Much Ado about Nothing*, an utterly irredeemable and inexcusable villain: but nothing short of such diabolical malice and craft could extenuate the fault of *Othello*, who must retain our sympathy at any cost. Perhaps, if any one play could be singled out as Shakespeare's masterpiece, it would be this. As a domestic tragedy, it cannot possess the sublimity of *Lear* or the charm of *As You Like It*, nor can it "call up spirits from the vasty deep" like *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*. But it is perhaps, the most perfect specimen of art, every line adapted with infallible judgment to produce the total impression desired, that Shakespeare has given us.

*Troilus and Cressida* was unquestionably produced at the beginning of 1609, but, as has been stated, was probably written some years earlier. If, however, the preface to an unauthorised reprint can be trusted, it had never been acted, and would therefore be available to help Shakespeare to keep his contract with the theatre. The anonymous prefacer deserves some credit, for he approves himself at least as good a judge of Shakespeare's merits as Ben Jonson was, and even speaks by the spirit of prophecy: "This author's comedies are so framed to the life that they serve for the most common commentaries of all the actions of our lives. . . . And believe this, that when he is gone, and his comedies out of sale, you will scramble for them, and set up a new English inquisition."

The spring of 1609 was signalised by another unauthorised publication, that of the *Sonnets*. The well-digested arrangement shows that the text was derived from some accurate copy. The publication may be supposed to have given Shakespeare much annoyance, but no expression of his feelings is extant. There is but one record of his having protested against the liberties so frequently taken with his works and his name.

*Cymbeline* may be most safely placed in the latter part of 1609. The following year would suit equally well, but that Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, in which traces of *Cymbeline* are to be found, had apparently been acted before



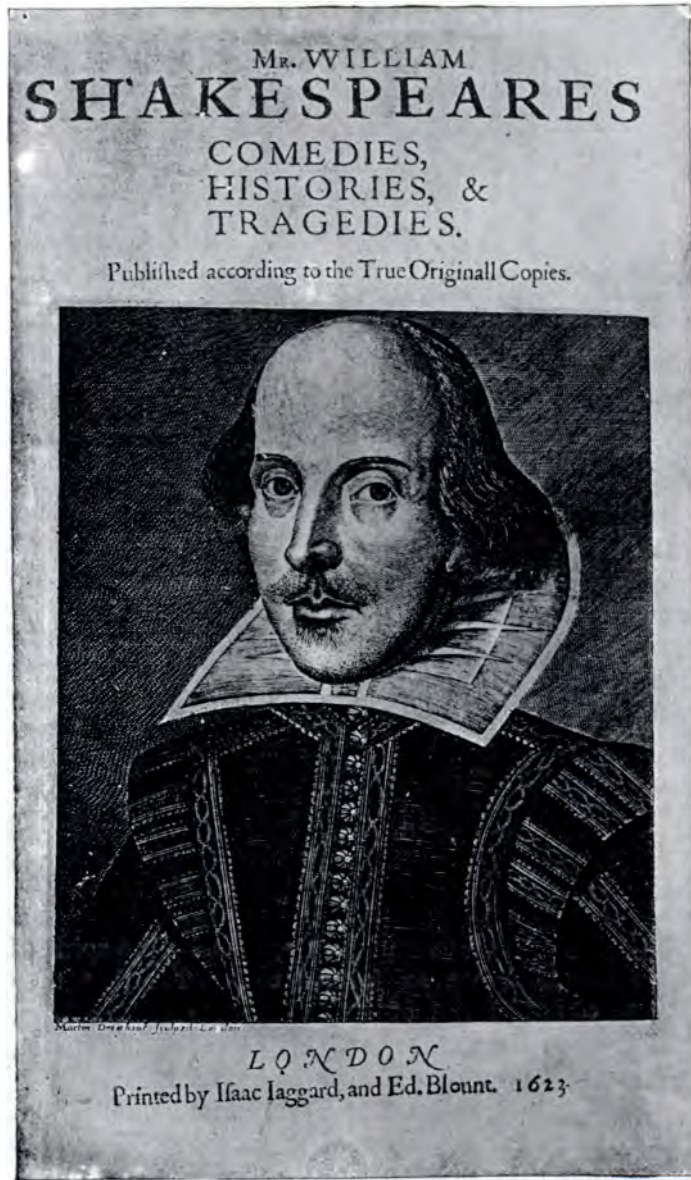
Miss Horton as Ariel in  
"The Tempest"

Publication of  
"Troilus"

Publication of  
the "Sonnets"



October 1610. *Cymbeline*, moreover, seems to follow *Othello* as its complement and corrective. If earlier than *Coriolanus*, this drama marks decisively the tran-



Title-page of the First Folio edition of Shakespeare

From the copy in the British Museum

sition to the poet's last manner, already apparent in *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, a style of growing obscurity as regards diction, but as regards versification of growing freedom, evinced in the constantly increasing tendency to un-stopped lines, light and weak endings, and redundant syllables at the verse's end. Judged by the metrical tests alone, *Coriolanus* would appear to be earlier than *Cymbeline*, but, though these tests are not to be neglected, they are not absolutely conclusive. The most important, the proportion of double endings, is partly governed by the character of the play. The double-ending, imparting elasticity to the verse in virtue of the catalectic syllable, is more appropriate to buoyant

spirits and enthusiastic romance; while the close-ending rather befits tragic passion and solemn pathos. It is, therefore, quite intelligible that *Cymbeline* should have more double-endings than *Coriolanus*. Brandes confidently places the latter drama in 1608. To us it seems that the comparatively

laboured and involved diction forbids so close an approximation to the date of *Antony and Cleopatra*. It appears much nearer to the more elaborate speeches in *A Winter's Tale*, which undoubtedly appeared in 1611.

*Cymbeline* is the spoiled child among Shakespeare's dramas. It abounds with careless and provoking faults, but is so full of inimitable natural beauties that all is forgotten and forgiven, and "rapture" is the only word to define the total impression. Wildly improbable as the story is, it enchains the attention throughout; the incidents are so beautiful and touching that we feel they ought to have happened if they did not. Imogen is a combination of all the varied excellences of woman, devoted beyond example, trustful and confiding without weakness, patient and meek, yet with spirit for the most hazardous undertakings; a wife with all the charm of girlhood. The scenes with Belarius and his pupils in the woods reveal the same Shakespeare who drew the banished Duke and his company in the Forest of Arden. But the most remarkable feature of *Cymbeline* is its ushering in a wide and tolerant view of life, depending upon experience and knowledge; more sound and durable,

*Dramatic  
quality of  
'Cymbeline'*

Shakespeare's Signature  
From his Will at Somerset House

therefore, than the early geniality which depended upon temperament. This had not withstood the deceptions and mortifications of middle life, but here, and still more conspicuously in *A Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, Shakespeare is upon a rock, serene and invincible. The dominant note of all these plays is forgiveness. The quality of mercy is, indeed, somewhat strained in the two later plays, but not here, where Shakespeare has extenuated the sin of Posthumus by making him yield unwillingly to what appears irresistible evidence; and that of Iachimo by representing him as a heedless man of fashion whose code of morals allows him no proper sense of the infamy of his conduct, and who, when he does perceive it, is overwhelmed by remorse. The conclusion leaves a perfect sense of satisfaction, save for two faults which might easily have been avoided—the nonsense of the soothsayer and the posthumous condemnation of the wicked queen, not for poisoning, but for patriotism.

If, as we have suggested, *Macbeth* was first given to the public stage early in 1610, it was still substantially the same play that the Court had seen in 1606, even though resemblances to the diction of *Cymbeline* should be thought to strengthen the probability of its having been revised for the public stage about the time of the production of the latter drama, which would also

"*Coriolanus*"

account for some metrical peculiarities. We pass, therefore, to the ripest fruit of Shakespeare's maturity, *Coriolanus*. As the poet in *Cymbeline*, so here the statesman is most prominent; and the date of 1610, defensible on other grounds, is rendered more probable by the political excitement of that year arising from the dissensions between King and Parliament. This view has been condemned as fanciful. We subscribe, nevertheless, to Sarrazin's opinion that "We are continually discovering that the great dramatist wrote more for his time and from his time than we have been accustomed to think." Nothing could move him more sensibly than this contest between Crown and Commons, King's servant as he was, under special obligation to his sovereign, and entirely conservative in his views of society and politics. He had already poured withering scorn upon the English mob in his picture of Cade and his rabble followers, and upon the Roman mob in the scenes attending Cæsar's funeral; *Coriolanus* gave him an opportunity of striking not merely at the multitude but at their leaders, for the Tribunes correspond to the refractory members of the lower House. The opportunity is used unsparingly, but at the same time the play is kept from degenerating into a party manifesto, not by extenuating the faults of the populace, but by pointing out equal faults in the aristocracy represented by *Coriolanus*. Shakespeare has merely to follow the narrative of Plutarch, which shows how the pride of a high-minded man, over-conscious of his real worth, begets haughtiness, and haughtiness insolence, and insolence unpopularity, and unpopularity banishment, and banishment treason, and how treason would have begotten infamy if, yielding to his better inspired mother and spouse, he had not at the last moment redeemed his honour at the sacrifice of his life. The admirable construction of the play is perhaps rather due to Plutarch than to Shakespeare; the characters, unsurpassable for force and truth, are mainly modelled after his hints; but Shakespeare, who never saw a Roman, has assimilated the Roman spirit far more perfectly than Plutarch, who lived under the sway of Rome. Menenius, Virgilia, Volumnia, are not moderns in classical masquerade, but Romans come to England. No play of Shakespeare's is more replete with pithy wisdom; but this is sometimes impaired by contorted obscurity of expression. He has in general such power of delivering himself as he wishes that he has become impatient and resentful of difficulties, and when they arise coerces language in an imperious fashion neither consistent with elegance nor with perspicuity.

"*A Winter's  
Tale*"

*A Winter's Tale* had probably not been long upon the stage when Simon Forman saw it in May 1611. All the new features of style and versification conspicuous in *Cymbeline* and *Coriolanus* are developed in this play to a still further extent. In borrowing his plot from Greene's *Pandosto*, Shakespeare appears to us to have for the first time built upon a sandy foundation. The interval of time in the middle, making virtually two dramas, is unfortunate; but the main defect is the utter unreasonableness of the jealousy of Leontes, which makes the foundation of the action. In such cases sympathy should be excited for the misguided offender as well as for the injured innocents.

Shakespeare has achieved this for Othello and Posthumus, but with Leontes even his art fails; the case is too flagrant. It may be granted that, psychologically, the character is a splendid study of monomania, of obsession by one fixed idea, but the exhibition of such unreason begets a feeling of angry impatience in the spectator, which cannot be allayed even by the nobility of Hermione, or the marvellous vigour and truth of the portrait of Paulina. The last two acts, on the other hand, revive the Shakespeare of *As You Like It*, who has written nothing more truly delectable than this rural idyll, the charm of which is enhanced by the consideration that he is himself a part of it, now that he is living in the country and depicting the life around him. In Perdita and her successor Miranda he displays

An art  
Which does mend nature—change it rather, but  
The art itself is nature.

All his preceding heroines have been carefully and substantially painted,



The Inscription on Shakespeare's grave in Stratford Church

and we well know why we admire them. They "have titles manifold." Perdita and Miranda are beautiful visions, ethereal impersonations of ideal loveliness; they do nothing, for they have nothing to do; and yet we have as clear a mental picture of them as of any of their forerunners, and are as entirely in love with them as their own swain can be. This is especially the case with Miranda; something more of substantiality is communicated to Perdita by the outbreak of pride and spirit in the midst of her humiliation, so delicately introduced to indicate that, though she knows it not, her veins run with royal blood:

I was not much afeard: for once or twice  
I was about to speak, and tell him plainly  
The self-same sun that shines upon his Court  
Hides not his visage from our cottage.

*The Two Noble Kinsmen*, in which Shakespeare is thought to have co-operated with Fletcher, may be probably assigned to 1611. The theory of the joint authorship has the support of the two writers' alliance in *Henry VIII.* two years later, and of the publication of the play with both their names in 1634. It further fits in well with the tradition of Shakespeare's obligation to furnish two plays annually at a time when he was becoming

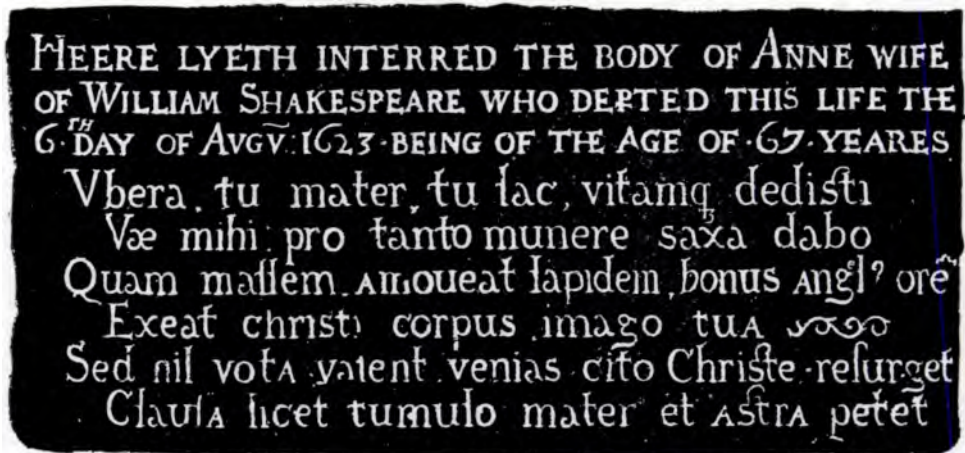
*"The Two  
Noble Kins-  
men"*



more and more absorbed in the details of country life, and less and less inclined to write for the stage. His hand is most discernible in the first and fifth acts. "All the passages," says Mr. Lee, "for which he can on any showing be held responsible develop the main plot, which is drawn from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*." The omission of the play from the Folio is not a proof that Shakespeare had no share in it, for the editors left out *Pericles*, and, as Mr. Fleay makes probable, were on the point of omitting *Timon*.

"*The  
Tempest*"

After *Hamlet*, *The Tempest* has the most personal interest of any of Shakespeare's works, for as his last important production it gives his latest views on life and mankind. It follows out the same tendency as has been remarked in *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*, to large and liberal views of life, serene tranquillity, contented acquiescence in the lot of man, tolerance of imper-



The Inscription on the grave of Shakespeare's Wife in Stratford Church

fections and forgiveness of injuries. All these precepts are impersonated in Prospero, whose situation as a person raised above common humanity by his transcendent knowledge and his sway over the unseen world enables him to announce them with the authoritative solemnity of a messenger from heaven. That they represent Shakespeare's ultimate conclusions cannot be doubted, for the play, which bears every token of Shakespeare's latest manner, cannot have been written until after the appearance of Sylvester Jourdain's account of the tempest at the "Bermoothes," published in October 1610. There is not the least reason to suppose that Shakespeare immediately founded a drama upon this pamphlet. The improbability of his having done so is shown by the likelihood that *A Winter's Tale*, brought out in the late winter or early spring of 1611, was then in preparation. Shakespeare would not take up another theme till this was off his hands. *The Tempest*, then, can in no case be earlier than 1611, and the present writer thinks he has almost proved it to have been written in 1612-1613 for performance at Court on occasion of the nuptials of James's daughter Elizabeth with the Elector Palatine, a view



which greatly enhances the piece's beauty, ingenuity, and significance. The discussion would be too long for our space, and the reader must be referred to the author's *Essays of an Ex-Librarian*.<sup>1</sup>

The source of the plot of *The Tempest* has until lately been a mystery, and even the most recent writers seem unacquainted with the important discovery by Edmund Dorer of a Spanish novelette from which it is evidently derived, unless Shakespeare and the Spaniard resorted to a common source. The story, a most dull and pedantic production, occurs in a collection entitled *Noches de Invierno* (Winter Nights), by Antonio de Eslava, Madrid, 1609 (the last of the multitudinous licences is dated in September). The plot is thus summarised by Anders (*Shakespeare's Books*):—

Source of the plot

Dardanus, King of Bulgaria, a virtuous magician, is dethroned by Niciphorus, Emperor of Greece, and has to flee with his only daughter, Seraphina. They go on board a little ship. In mid-ocean Dardanus, having parted the waters, rears by art of magic a beautiful submarine palace, where he resides with his daughter till she becomes marriageable. Then the father, in the disguise of a fisherman, carries off the son of Niciphorus to his palace under the sea. The youth falls in love with the maiden. The Emperor having died in the meantime, Dardanus returns with his daughter and his son-in-law to his former kingdom, which he leaves the latter to rule over, while he withdraws into solitude.

This is unquestionably the groundwork of the plot of *The Tempest*. It is some argument for Shakespeare having obtained it directly from Eslava, and not from a common source, that the title of Eslava's book, *Noches de Invierno*, may have suggested to him the title of *A Winter's Tale*, which he began to write in 1610, the year following the publication of the Spanish stories.

*The Tempest* is the most worthy conclusion imaginable of Shakespeare's dramatic career. It is a noble sunset. All is serenity, and all is splendour. The poetry is of the highest order. The action is admirably planned. The balance between the serious and the comic elements is most happily maintained. Of the imagination that could create a Caliban and an Ariel nothing need be said, and we have spoken already of its scarcely less marvellous exercise in embodying that adorable phantom, Miranda. We need not doubt that Prospero's book and staff are Shakespeare's own, and that Shakespeare partly impersonated himself in the benevolent magician. Yet not entirely.

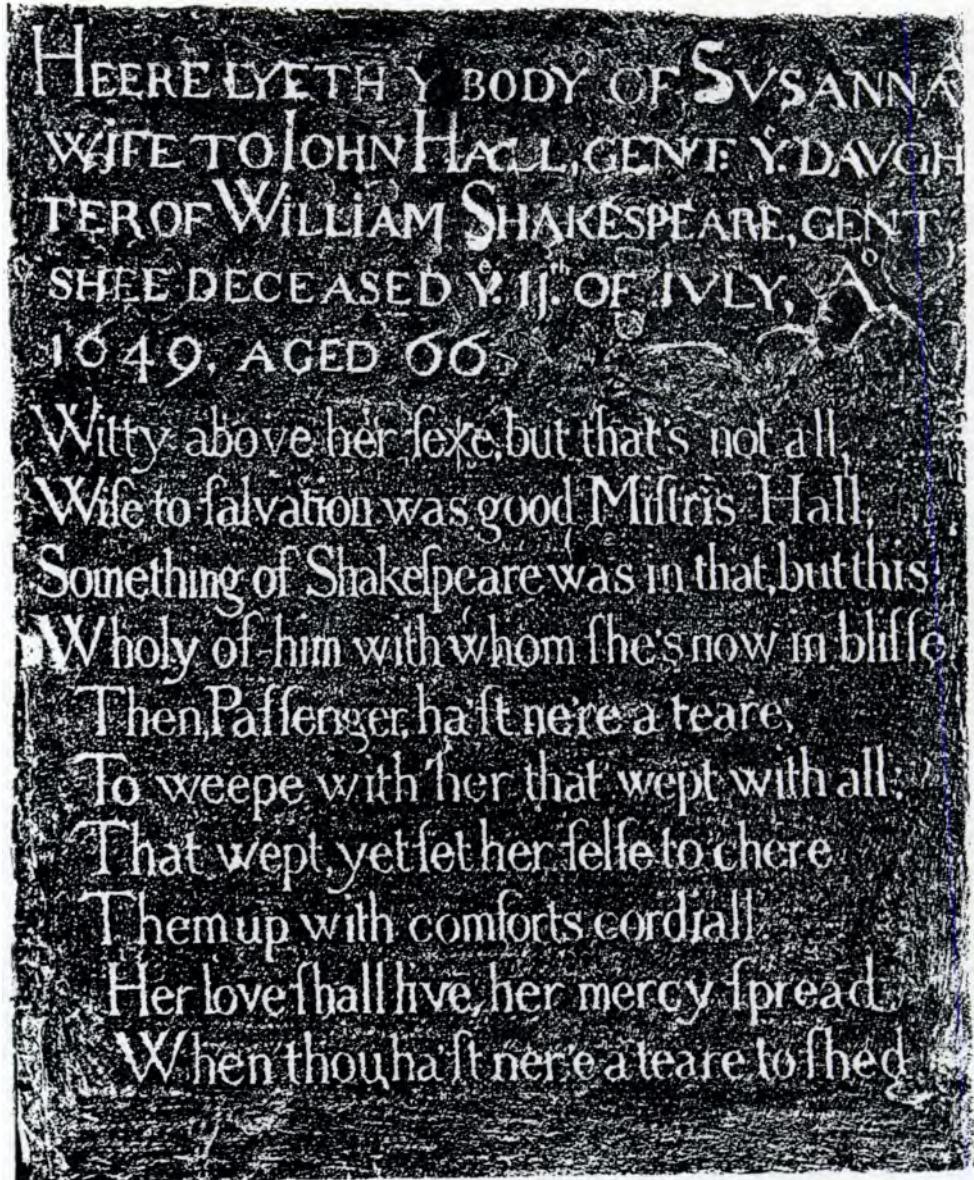
Shakespeare, Prospero and James I.

<sup>1</sup> One confirmatory circumstance may be added, not observed by the author when he wrote, but pointed out by the writer of a German essay (in a *Schul-Programm*, he thinks), whose name has unfortunately passed from his remembrance. In Act I., scene 2, Prospero inquires from Ariel the time of day, and is told that it is "past the mid season." He replies:

"At least two glasses: The time twixt six and now  
Must by us both be spent most precious."

Why should the hour be two in the afternoon? The average day of twelve hours represents what, slightly departing from the letter of Scripture to suit the duodecimal system by which diurnal time is measured, should be the normal term of human existence, seventy-two years. Allowing six years to the hour, two in the afternoon answers to forty-eight years, Shakespeare's precise age when he wrote *The Tempest*, if this was written for the Princess Elizabeth's marriage. Prospero's admonition to him, that his remaining time must be "spent most precious" corresponds to his concluding declaration that henceforth "Every third thought shall be my grave."

Prospero betrays foibles which Shakespeare would not have put to his own account, and his confession that he lost his dukedom through seclusion from



The Inscription on the grave of Shakespeare's Daughter in Stratford Church

affairs of State, "rapt in secret studies," is manifestly intended as a warning to James, whose family concerns are the veiled subject of the piece, and whose ideal of himself is faithfully reproduced in Prospero's character. As we have written elsewhere, "A wise, humane, pacific prince, gaining his



ends not by violence but by policy ; devoted to far-off purposes which none but himself can realise, much less fathom ; independent of counsellors, safely contemptuous of foes, and controlling all about him by his superior wisdom ; keeping in the background till the decisive hour has struck, and then interfering effectually ; devoted to lawful knowledge, but the sworn enemy of black magic—such was James in James's eyes, and such is Prospero."<sup>1</sup>

Shakespeare's magic book, nevertheless, was not cast so deeply into the sea that it could not upon occasion, like Timon's gold in Lucian, be fished up *'Henry VIII.'*<sup>2</sup>



**Two views of Shakespeare's Bust at Stratford-on-Avon**

*Specially photographed to show the curious difference between the two profiles*

again. The metre of *Henry VIII.* alone would betoken a very late date, even if we did not know that it was in course of performance when, on June 29, 1613, the Globe Theatre was burned down. These metrical peculiarities are not all of one kind ; some portions indicate beyond dispute the authorship of Fletcher, while the metre of other parts is fully consistent with the authorship of Shakespeare. That Shakespeare had a hand in it is certain from its appearance in the First Folio during Fletcher's lifetime. The editors must certainly have known who wrote the play that burned down their own theatre ! The play is evidently a hasty piece of work, produced in response to a popular

<sup>1</sup> *Essays of an Ex-Librarian.*

demand, which can hardly have been unconnected with the great event of the day, the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth. It was not, like *The Tempest*, designed for representation at Court, but was meant to symbolise by the marriage of Anne Boleyn, the general relief at the Princess having made a Protestant match, and not espoused a Roman Catholic prince, which correspondence among the State Papers shows to have been much apprehended. The expedition necessary that the drama might appear while the marriage was still a topic of universal interest would involve the co-operation of two dramatists, and Shakespeare, by Ben Jonson's testimony the most facile writer of his day, and lately a proprietor of the theatre where the play was to be acted, was of all men the most likely to be invoked to help Fletcher. The portions that may be most confidently ascribed to him are Act I., scene 1; Act II., scenes 2 and 3; Act V., scene 1. All are worthy of him, if regarded as improvisations, as in fact they were. Fletcher also has written well; the fine speech of Cranmer at Elizabeth's christening brings the subject to the most satisfactory conclusion of which it admits, and would be received with enthusiasm by an audience remembering that Elizabeth was also the christian-name of the Princess whom the play was written to honour. The dramatists have shown tact in availing themselves to the utmost of Katharine's pathetic situation, without blackening King Henry, which would have ruined their design. The participation of Massinger has been suspected; but if he was, as generally believed, a Roman Catholic, he cannot well have co-operated in so Protestant a play.

*Shakespeare's  
last years*

If our view of the origin of *Henry VIII.* is correct, our last glimpse of Shakespeare as an author reveals him in the act of rendering a good-natured service to a fellow dramatist, an attitude entirely in keeping with his character. His remaining years were few, and the notices of him are few also. In March 1613 he bought a house in Blackfriars, which he immediately leased; in November 1614 he was in London on apparently local business; in February 1616 his daughter Judith married Thomas Quiney. The serene spirit of his latest plays coincides with the date of his residence at Stratford, and could not well have been his if he had not been living in the enjoyment of domestic tranquillity. He can hardly have felt any deep affection for the wife with whose society he had dispensed for so long, but continuous dispeace would hardly have escaped the Stratford gossips. The eccentric bequest to his wife of his second-best bed must have been explicable by some circumstance unknown to us. Could it have been Mrs. Shakespeare's marriage-bed? The will which conveyed it, and at the same time gave evidence of his affection for his daughters and his remembrance of his old theatrical comrades, was executed on March 25, 1616. The testator declares himself to be then "in perfect health," but by April 23 he was no more. According to a tradition preserved by Ward, his death was occasioned by a fever contracted at a jovial meeting with Ben Jonson and Drayton. It may be doubted whether Ben was sufficiently well affected to Shake-

speare and Drayton to come down to Warwickshire to drink with either of them.<sup>1</sup>

On April 25 Shakespeare was interred in the parish church, and honoured with a tomb in the chancel, not as a poet, but as an impropiator of tithes. His grave was covered with a flat stone, bearing the inscription known to all, artless indeed, but adapted to the capacity of the sextons for whose admonition it was designed. But ere long, certainly by 1623, when it is mentioned by

*Shakespeare's  
Tomb and  
Monument*



The chancel of Stratford Church, showing Shakespeare's Bust

Leonard Digges, an elaborate monument, including the famous bust, was erected in the chancel, at the cost, tradition affirms, of his daughter Susanna Hall. The terse Latin distich inscribed upon it celebrates Shakespeare's wisdom, urbanity, and genius for epic poetry, but is silent as to his work as a dramatist :

Judicio Pylum, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,  
Terra tegit, populus maeret, Olympus habet.

The temper of Sophocles no less than his genius resembled Shakespeare's,

<sup>1</sup> In the very year of Shakespeare's death Jonson ridiculed *The Tempest* and *Henry V.* in a prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*, not in the first edition. His professed eulogium on Drayton appears to us a thinly disguised satire.



but, instead of the expected *Sophoclem*, we get *Socratem* at the expense of a false quantity. One is led to suspect that the writer disapproved of plays, in which case he may well have been Shakespeare's son-in-law, Dr. John Hall, a Latin scholar with Puritan leanings. If so, we have testimony to the affection with which Shakespeare was regarded in his own family; further evinced by the bestowal of his surname as a christian-name upon the eldest son of his daughter Judith, born in the November succeeding his death. The English lines upon the monument were probably composed by some friend in London.

Space forbids our attempting any survey of Shakespeare's literary or intellectual character. Inexhaustible themes for discussion are afforded by his probable views on religion and politics, his obligations to predecessors and his relations to contemporaries, his appreciation in his own day and his influence on the after-world. The comparative fulness of the treatment which, nevertheless, we have been able to accord him, will not appear disproportionate when it is considered with what remoteness from all possible competition he stands forth as Britain's national poet. To remove any other great poet from our literature would be to lop off a limb from a many-branching tree, to remove Shakespeare would be to take the sun out of heaven.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE JACOBEOAN POETS

THE authors who will be considered in the remaining chapters of this volume were all of them liable in earlier and laxer periods of literary history to be treated as being what was vaguely called "Elizabethan." Fifty years ago it awakened no protest to see Shirley described as an Elizabethan dramatist and Hall as an Elizabethan prose-writer, although the former was only seven years old when the great Queen passed away, and although the latter survived until within four years of the Restoration. All that was seen in the general survey was the burst of production between the reign of Mary and the Commonwealth, and to this it was natural to assign the name of its most picturesque and romantic patron. But we realise now the inconvenience of treating this complex period under one heading, and we see, moreover, a subtle difference between the character of what was written in England during the reign of Elizabeth and the character of what belongs to James I. It is often objected that monarchs have nothing to do with literature, and that a division of poetry and prose effected on monarchical lines must be perfunctory and fallacious. But in times when the sovereign was the active source of public feeling, when everything that moulded national life was attached, as with strings or rays, to the steps of the Throne, a modification of the arts might be directly consequent on the death of a ruler.

In the case of Elizabeth this was more than commonly true, and we are perfectly justified in drawing an invisible line across the chronicle of our literature at the year 1603, and in calling what precedes it Elizabethan and what follows it Jacobean. The death of the Queen was a signal, for which the intellectual part of the country had, more or less consciously, been respectfully waiting. It meant very much more than a different set of costumes at Hampton Court or a new head on the coinage. It meant the introduction of a fresh era, which had long been preparing, but which reverence and awe for a venerable lady had restrained. Everybody who suffered from the severity of the old *régime* greeted the new reign with hopefulness. The new monarch, conscious of the somewhat unwelcome part he had to play, was lavish in his declarations of universal encouragement and kindness. Elizabeth had outlived almost every one of those who had helped her to usher in her peculiar systems, political, ecclesiastical and social. Her prestige, as of a noble aged creature, majestic in her extreme fragility, preserved itself

in an artificial abstraction. She died, and as her subjects reverently bowed their heads, they might be overheard to breath a sigh of relief.

In literature the change was subtler and less direct than it was in politics. It would be an absurd mistake to seek for any sudden change. The alteration was made gradually ; it is more a matter of tone or colour than an abrupt matter of form. But, looking broadly at English books from 1580 to 1625, we see towards the middle of that period a tendency to alteration which is the more palpable the further we recede from it. It is like the general aspect of a rolling range of mountain where, at a due distance, we perceive diffused light on the one side, diffused shadow on the other. This symbol may be the more readily accepted, because the general trend is unquestionably to the peak of Shakespeare and then gently down into the flat country again. The Elizabethan period is the sun-lighted ascent, the Jacobean is the more and more deeply shadowed decline. But round the central height, on what we may call the upland alps, the altitude is so great and the luminosity of the atmosphere so general that we do not inquire whether we happen to stand on the side of rise or of descent. Nevertheless, an element, very difficult to define, distinguishes Marlowe, who is entirely on the ascending plane, from Ben Jonson, who is very near the summit, and who spreads around it, and who yet is definitely and unavoidably, in the main body of his work, at that place where the general slope begins to decline.

For one thing, the death of the stubborn and dauntless Elizabeth marked the final break-up of that survival of mediæval sentiment which she had so resolutely upheld. Certain prejudices of the Queen had succeeded in preventing, or delaying, the fusion of those great elements which flowed through England during the middle of her reign. She separated them, she kept them from mingling in one great national channel, but this unification was inevitable, and it proceeded as soon as her powerful hands were relaxed. All through her reign the Renaissance, which had arrived in England so tardily, was still further delayed in its action by the surviving traditions of the Middle Ages. The new learning, the new ardour for beauty, the new habit of speculation, were all busy in Elizabeth's reign, but they were not allowed freely to communicate with one another. They were partly intermingled, but they were not blended into a consistent and progressive unity. This result of this lack of fusion was that, even in their most brilliant developments, something of an exotic character was retained. In poetry, to take an example which comes directly home to us, certain series of beautiful pieces of writing might be termed Italian, or Latin, or even French, by an observer anxious to minimise the originality of the new English literature. But with the withdrawal of the restraints of Elizabeth, our writings immediately became nationalised, and there could no longer be a question that, for good or ill, they represented direct the instincts and aspirations of the English people, and not those of a cluster of refined scholars in a college, or of the courtiers who collected round some Italianated nobleman.

If, moreover, any irresolute English author had been inclined to doubt



Title-page of the "Works of King James I." 1619

whether the practice of literature would be tolerated during the new reign, his fears might well have been founded on the apprehension that the monarch was too much rather than too little interested in the art of letters. In King JAMES VI. and I. the London poets came forward to welcome one who was so far from "hating boetry"—like one of his successors—that he had laboured with zeal to become a poet himself. Nor was verse the only medium in which James VI. of Scotland had exercised his abilities. He was no less ambitious to shine in prose, as theologian, as critic, as sociologist, as publicist. No writer in the glorious galaxy of his English subjects, not even Bacon and Raleigh, sought to excel in so many fields of literature as the King; certainly none was so confident, in his sanguine moments, that he had succeeded in all. No one, in the presence of Apollo, affected more ecstasy, or assumed a greater claim to poetic immortality.

I shall your names eternal ever sing;  
 I shall tread down the grass on Parnass hill;  
 By making with your names the world to ring,  
 I shall your names from all oblivion bring;  
 I lofty Virgil shall to life restore,—

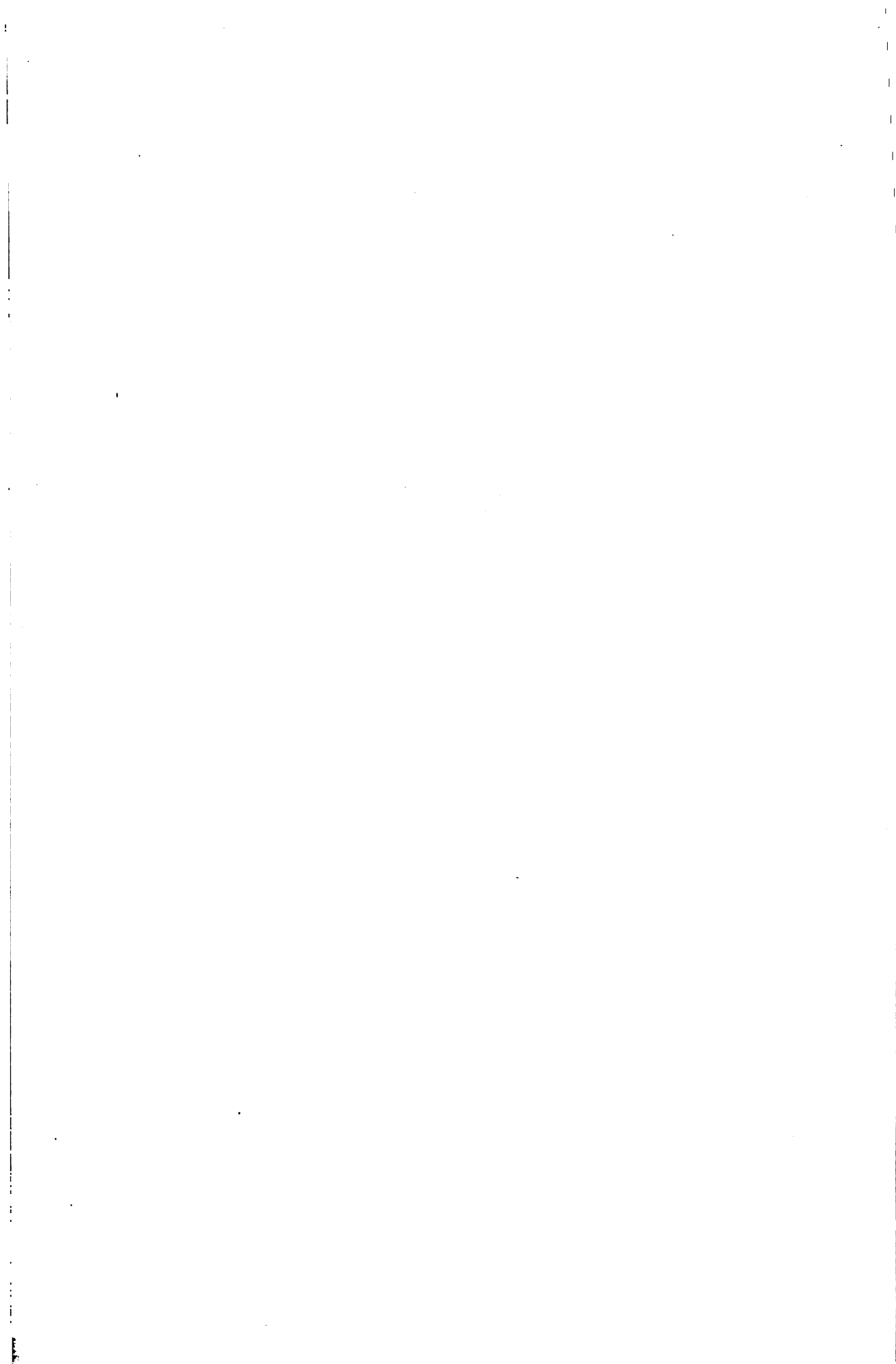
sang King James VI. very lustily in his *Invocations to the Goddis*, and his were none of those elegant and trivial efforts at genteel penmanship which royal personages in all ages have conceived to be a graceful amateur pastime. There was nothing of the amateur about James. He aimed at no less glory than is given by "the perfection of Poesy, whereunto few or none can attain." Moreover, he was in this also, so far as he went, a genuine man of letters, that he saw, and poignantly and repeatedly deplored, his own deficiencies. Criticism, which could otherwise hardly treat the grotesque works of James I. with patience, is disarmed by his candour. "Alas!" he says, "God by nature hath refused me the like lofty and quick genius"—which he is applauding in the French poet Du Bartas—"and my dull muse, age and fortune have refused me the like skill and learning." Later on in life, when the King still hankered after literary glory, still stretched on tiptoe to pluck a leaf from the golden laurel which, after all, he found to hang too high for him, his judgment was better than his practice. He could not pretend even to his subjects that he was satisfied with his own prose or verse, and there is something really pathetic in the way in which he alternates sentences of royal truculence with apologies for imperfections due to burdens of office so great and so continual, and to a spirit that never has leave to be "free and unvexed." Evidence seems to prove that the King's modest estimate of his own genius was more than acknowledged in England, and literary aspirants had to be very poor or in great personal danger before they brought themselves down to flattering the monarch as a writer. But, in an age so abundantly autocratical, there must have been something extremely gratifying to the mind of authors in knowing that any one of them could hope to do better than the despot what the despot of all things most desired to do.

**James VI.** of Scotland and I. of England (1566-1625) was the son of Mary, Queen of Scotland, and Lord Darnley. His mother's abdication, the year after





JAMES I  
AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY PAUL VAN SOMER



his birth, made him King of Scotland, and exposed him to extraordinary dangers. Those about him, however, perceived these perils, and his education was conducted with remarkable care and good sense. He became a sound scholar, and his intellectual sympathies were widened almost to the limits of taste and knowledge as understood by the Renaissance of his time in Scotland. He early determined to be an eminent writer, and in 1584, in the midst of the intrigues of politicians contending for his person, he published *The Essays of a Prentice in the Divine Art of Poesie*. These are sonnets, in which the King emulates the French writers of his day, a romance in *rime royal* called *Phœnix*, some short gnomic pieces, and versions of his favourite poet, Du Bartas, and of Lucan. All these, though with some Scotch peculiarities, are essentially and characteristically Elizabethan. In 1588, James began his career as a theologian by the publication of the first of his *Meditations*. In 1591 he issued fresh sets of translations from Du Bartas as *His Majesty's Poetical Exercises at Vacant Hours*, in 1597 a prose dialogue on *Demonology*, and in 1599 his political treatise called *Basilikon Doron*, dedicated to his son Henry. All these were his publications before, in 1603, he became King of England; after that event he produced *The True Law of Free Monarchies* (1603), *A Counterblast to Tobacco* (1604), *Triplici Nodo Triplex Cuneus* (1607), and a number of controversial works of theology. He permitted his chaplain, Richard Montague (1577-1641), the famous author of the *Appello Casarem*, to collect his *Works* in 1616. This was done, with much greater completeness, by Mr. R. S. Rait in 1900-1901.

If James I., on his arrival at his Southern country, had any time to spare <sup>*The Sonneteers*</sup> for an inspection of the national poetry, he might observe that the sonnet had undergone rapid and complete development since he, in 1584, and under the guidance of Du Bartas, had been one of the first to cultivate it in the North. The posthumous publication of Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, of which an account has already been given, had given a violent stimulus to the fashion of writing sonnets; during the last ten years of Elizabeth this was one of the forms of literature most universally cultivated. The *Delia* of SAMUEL DANIEL, which was very widely enjoyed and imitated, inaugurated the system by which poets enshrined in cycles of sonnets, under a feigned pastoral name, their amatory passion for some cold fair lady or their enthusiastic admiration of some friend. In this, the second period of the English sonnet, close attention was paid to smoothness of versification, and in this respect the performances of the sonneteers were of great value. They made the old rough jingle of the popular poetry intolerable to the ear, by familiarising it with more luxurious and delicate artifice in prosody. Many of the sonnet-cycles, in fact, were no more than exercises in versification, and the best sonneteers, having learned to manipulate iambic verse and to arrange their rhymes, passed on to other business of a broader kind. But some of the sonnet-cycles were valuable in themselves, and free from slavish imitation of Desportes and the other fashionable French models. There is intellectual strength and a certain splendour of imagery in Barnabe Barnes (1569-1609), whose *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* belongs to 1593. Barnes, who had been a soldier in Italy and France, had a wide knowledge of the writings of the Pléiade,

justice according to goddis aorde, & sufficient provision for thair sustentation & comlie ordour  
 in thair police, the poudre furnished, humiliaie aduancid, & the saye so renowned thair  
 superiority, & thair glorie thair as the flourishing of your estate in peace, & the  
 learning may be one of the chief points of your earthly glorie, being our altho  
 uare with baird the extremities, altho as well as ye propose the maine purpose, so not to  
 suffer poudre poudre bishopps, but as sum, so thair qualities will decrease to be preferred  
 before of others, so thair <sup>thair</sup> with sic bandis as maye preserve that estate from corrupcion  
 to corrupcion, the more estate now that be ordour <sup>in purpose</sup> ~~the~~ cunning according to thair rank in  
 parliament is the nobilitie at such seconde in rank, yett ouer farre first in gracing, & so  
 youare other to doe good or euill as they are inclined, the naturall seiling is that I have  
 perceived that estate subiect to in my erme has bene a felles arrogancie consist of thing  
 greater & youare, drinking in with thair aerie nourishe milke that thair honoure  
 secude in the comitting those points of iniquitie, to shoulde be oppression the manner gra  
 that duellis nere thair & to thair seruice following, altho ch they haule meeting of  
 thair, to maintaine thair seruandis & dependantis in any wronge altho ch they be not  
 answarable to the law for any bodie will maintaine his man in a violer cause, & for  
 any displeasure that they apprehende to be done unto thairne by thairne neichbour to take  
 up a plaine feade against him, & without respect to god, king, or commonweill to buy  
 in our brachie, & all his kinne against him & all his, so they will shrinke the king  
 youre in thair commune millice they agree to giuance one assurance to a shewe  
 daye for keeping of the peax, yhaue be thair naturall deute they are obligid to obey  
 the law & keipe the peax all the dayes of thair life upon the perrell of sin.

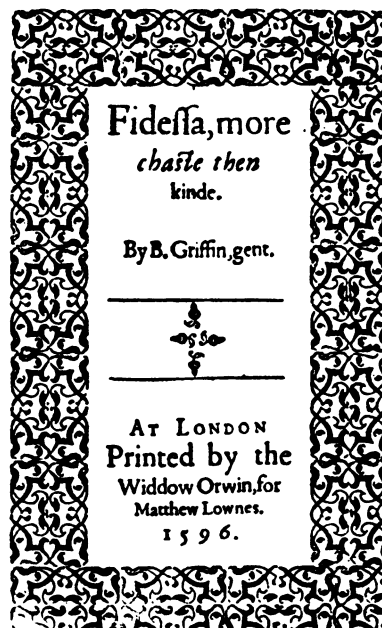
Facsimile page of the MS. of "Basilikon Doron," preserved in the British Museum

and directly imitates Ronsard and Joachim du Bellay. Here is a typical sonnet by Barnes :

That golden planet, lamp of this world's light,  
 Whose glorious eastern insurrection shows  
 His ceaseless course, whose term no creature knows  
 That silver planet, torch of silent night,  
 Which, when the Sun reposes his beams bright  
 In western seas, her planet-darts forth throws,  
 Whose influence doth strange events compose ;  
 That boisterous turbulence of north winds' might  
 Which swells and ruffles in outrageous sort ;  
 Those cheerful southern showers whose fruitful dew  
 Brings forth all sustenance for man's comfort ;  
 East, West, North, South, if none thy puissance knew,  
 Relate thy wondrous virtues, and with praise  
 From West to East, from North to South them raise.

Daniel was the master openly accepted in his *Fidessa* of 1596 by Bartholomew Griffin, by the unknown author of *Zepheria* in 1594, by William Percy (1575-1648) in his *Cælia* of 1594, and by Richard Linche in his *Diella* of 1596. It is hardly necessary to point out that there were greater poets than those, independent of the influence of Daniel, who nevertheless had doubtless read the *Delia* and been stimulated by it. Among such accidental or occasional sonneteers we include not Shakespeare merely, but Spenser, in his *Amoretti* of 1595, Drayton in his *Idea's Mirror* of 1594, and Donne. The entire business of sonnet-writing, in which a considerable amount of personal emotion was unquestionably combined with vague and sinuous methods of expression, which often subtly concealed it, was of very great importance as a school of poetic style. It was by composing sonnets in the last years of Elizabeth's reign that the ordinary clever person first learned to use his own language with security and grace.

But in the general practice of these forms the glowing spring-tide of poetry was already on the wane. The victory of imaginative speech had now become so universal that all human thought began naturally to turn to verse whether it was genuinely poetical or not. This was the moment at which men of high talent began to be poets when nature had perhaps intended them rather to excel as historians or philosophers. In the laureate, SAMUEL DANIEL, whose influence we have seen to have been paramount as a sonneteer, we meet with the first example of poetry beginning to wither on the bough. Daniel's



Title-page of Bartholomew Griffin's  
 "Fidessa," 1596



grace, smoothness and purity seem to belong to a much later period, and to a time when the imagination had lost its early fervour. He wrote lengthy historical poems, besides numerous sonnets, masques, and epistles. These last, which have the merit of brevity, are Daniel's most attractive contri-

butions to English literature, and are singularly elegant in their stately, limpid flow of moral reflection. In prose, Daniel showed himself one of the most instructed of our early critics of poetry. Another philosophical writer, on whose style the turbulent passion of the age has left but little mark, is the great Irish jurist, Sir JOHN DAVYS, who, in his youth, composed several poems of the highest merit in their limited field. In his *Nosce Teipsum*, a treatise of considerable length and perspicuous dignity, dealing with the immortality of the soul, Davys was the first to employ on a long flight the solemn four-line stanza of which the type is supplied by the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*.

Three years earlier he



Title-page of "The Civile Wares," 1609 with portrait of Daniel

had printed a most ingenious philosophical poem, of dancing; and the delicacy of Davys's talent is well seen in a little work less known than either of these, the *Hymns of Astræa*. The *Hymns of Astræa* are neither better nor worse than the ordinary poetical compliments paid to Elizabeth. They certainly do not show Davys at his best. Both Daniel and Davys offer early and distinguished examples

of the employment of imagination to illuminate elaborate mental processes.

**Samuel Daniel** (1562–1619) was the son of a music-master at or near Taunton, where he was born towards the end of 1562. At the age of seventeen he was entered a commoner of Magdalen College, Oxford. Here he stayed three years, but, having devoted himself more to English history and poetry than to “pecking and hewing at logic,” he left the University without a degree. Daniel’s first publication was *A Worthy Tract of Paulus Jovius*, in prose (1585). But this was

*Samuel  
Daniel*

an accidental exercise, for he was really giving himself heart and soul to the study of poetry, having, he says, “adventured to bestow all my powers therein.” Daniel spent some time in Italy, and appears to have been personally acquainted with the poet Guarini, whose *Pastor Fido* brought him into fame in 1590. Daniel was slow to give his writings to the public, and his earliest sonnets appeared, surreptitiously, in Nash’s (1591) edition of Sidney’s *Astrophel and Stella*. Finally, in February 1592, the first edition of Daniel’s *Delia* appeared, with the romance of *The Complaint of Rosamond* appended to it. The publications of Daniel now became abundant—in 1594, the archaic tragedy of *Cleopatra*; in 1595, *The First Four Books of the Civil Wars*; in 1599, *Musophilus* and *A Letter from Octavia*. In 1601 Daniel, now one of the most popular living



**Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset**

*After the portrait by Mytens*

writers, collected his *Works*. He became tutor to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and afterwards to Anne Clifford at Appleby and at Skipton, until he resigned his charge in 1602. Daniel welcomed the King and Queen in Rutland as they were approaching London with a stately and far from obsequious *Panegyric*; the sovereigns appear to have been pleased with him, and he took his place forthwith at Court, where he acted as a species of unofficial poet-laureate, preparing masks, songs and dramatic interludes. His duties seem to have included the licensing of plays. For this he enjoyed a “fair salary,” and was the Queen’s “servant in ordinary.” He speaks of the repose which this permanent patronage afforded him:

I who, by that most blessed hand sustained  
In quietness, do eat the bread of rest.

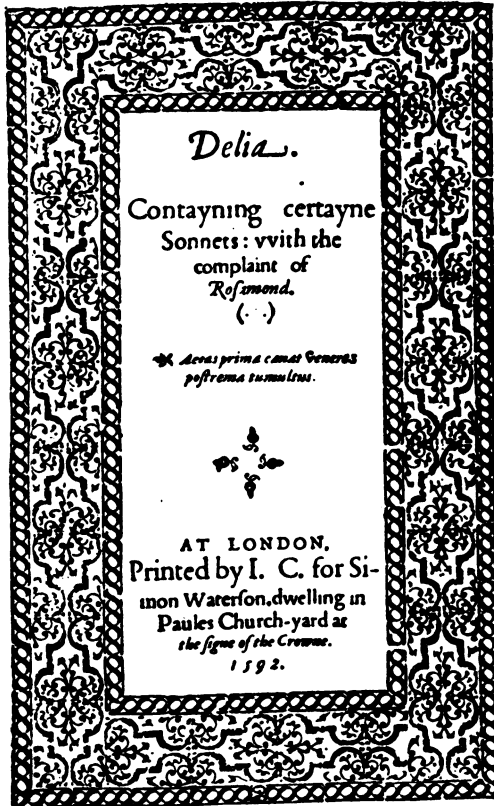
He held his theatrical censorship from 1603 until 1618. As the years progressed, a certain sluggishness of temperament, which had always, perhaps, been characteristic of him, became more marked. He “would be hid at his garden-

house in Old Street, near London, for some months together, as the tortoise busieth himself all the winter in the ground." This was with the purpose of devoting himself more completely to his work, which gradually grew to be almost wholly historical. His great *History of England* was brought to the death of Stephen in 1612 and to that of Edward III. in 1617; he then resigned it into the hands of John Trussell, of Winchester. More and more averse to society, Daniel "turned husbandman," and rented a farm at Beckington, in his native county of Somerset,

where he died in October 1619; his former pupil, Anne Clifford, now Countess Dowager of Pembroke and Montgomery, raised a monument to him in the church of Beckington. The fame of Daniel, long obscured, was revived at the Romantic Revival. Wordsworth, Southey, Hazlitt, and Lamb competed to eulogise him, and Coleridge said: "Read Daniel—the admirable Daniel—in his *Civil Wars* and *Triumph of Hymen*. The style and language are just such as any very pure and manly writer of the present day (Wordsworth, for example) would use; it seems quite modern in comparison with the style of Shakespeare."

How simple the narrative manner of Daniel was may be exemplified by stanzas taken almost at random from the *Civil Wars*:

And, Memory, preservress of things  
done,  
Come thou, unfold the wounds, the  
wrack, the waste;  
Reveal to me how all the strife  
begun  
'Twixt Lancaster and York in ages  
past;  
How causes, counsels, and events did  
run



Title-page of the earliest edition of Samuel Daniel's

"*Delia*," 1592

So long as these unhappy times did last;  
Unintermixt with fiction's fantasies.  
I versify the truth, not poetise.  
And to the end we may with better ease  
Discern the true discourse, vouchsafe to show  
What were the times foregoing near to these,  
That these we may with better profit know;  
Tell how the world fell into this disease,  
And how so great distemperature did grow,  
So shall we see by what degrees it came,  
How things, at full, do soon wax out of frame.  
For kings had, from the Norman conqueror, reigned  
With intermixt and variable fate,



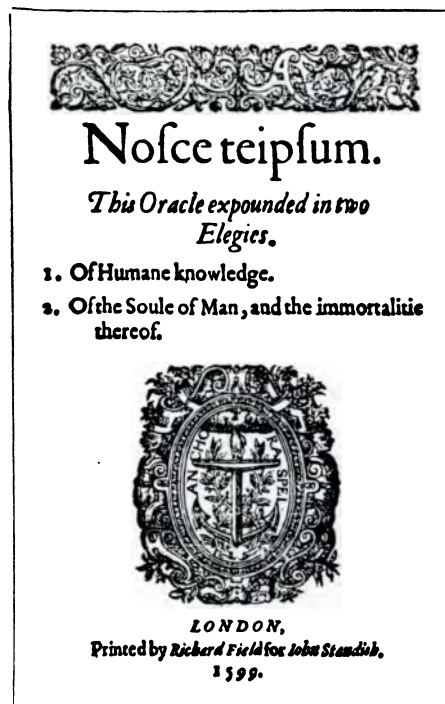
When England to her greatest height attained  
 Of power, dominion, glory, wealth, and state ;  
 After it had, with much ado, sustained  
 The violence of princes, with debate  
 For titles, and the often mutinies  
 Of nobles for their ancient liberties.

The tendency of Daniel was against the picturesque and romantic, and towards the civilised and modern in literary taste. In this respect he occupies a remarkable position as dimly foreshadowing the eighteenth century, and exemplifying that instinct for rigid propriety of diction of which we find scarcely a trace in English literature before him. Daniel was a philosophical realist, and he dared to gird even at Spenser for his romance, saying, in the course of his *Delia* :

Let others sing of knights and paladines,  
 In aged accents and untimely words,  
 Paint shadows in imaginary lines  
 Which well the reach of their high  
 wits records.

Such adventures in language and in art were unwelcome to the "sober-minded Daniel."

Whether Sir JOHN DAVYS (or DAVIS) (1569-1626) joined in the otherwise universal laudation of Daniel's early poems is uncertain. If, as is supposed, Davys satirised his contemporary under the name of Dacus, he put his finger with great emphasis on Daniel's radical fault, the prosiness of his poetry. To the witchery of the sonnet-cycles, too, Davys was recalcitrant, circulating in MS. a series of *Gulling Sonnets*, which were impertinent parodies of *Delia*. Nevertheless, the place of Davys in literary history is very close to that occupied by Daniel. He was the third son of John Davys of Tisbury, in Wilts, where he was christened on April 16, 1569. His father died when the poet was ten years of age, "and left him with his two brothers to his mother to be educated ; she therefore brought them all up to learning." John was sent to Winchester, and in 1585 to Queen's College, Oxford ; in 1587 he was admitted to the Middle Temple. Little is known about his early years, but in 1593 he had ready for the press his poem on dancing, called *Orchestra*, which appeared in 1596. In the preceding year Davys had become a barrister, but early in 1598 he was disbarred for cudgelling Richard Martin—afterwards Recorder of London, but then a young man of manners no less boisterous than his own—during dinner in Hall. Davys went back to Oxford in disgrace, and wrote his great philosophical poem, the *Nosce Teipsum*, which appeared in



Sir John  
 Davys

Title-page of Sir John Davys's  
 "Nosce Teipsum," 1599

1599. Queen Elizabeth was greatly pleased with this work, and in the same year Davys addressed to her his *Hymns to Astraea*. He was now in great favour, and in 1601 he sat for Corfe Castle in the Queen's last parliament. Davys was one of those selected to attend Lord Hunsdon in announcing to James VI. of Scotland his accession. When his name was announced in the presence, the literary King immediately asked "whether he were *Nosce Teipsum*," and on



**Michael Drayton**

*After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery*

learning that he was, "embraced him and conceived a considerable liking for him."

His further favour was shown by Davys's appointment in November of the same year to be Solicitor-General for Ireland, when he was knighted. His career (save that in 1622 he collected his poems) was henceforth entirely dedicated to legal and political business, in which he displayed ability of a very high order. Charles I. was prepared to continue the favour which his father had shown to Davys, who was finally nominated to the post of Lord Chief Justice, the purple and ermine robes being actually purchased, but just before the date of his promotion he was found dead in his bed, on December 8, 1626. Davys enjoyed the reputation, both in Ireland and England, of being *judex incorruptus et patronus fidus*. His daughter, having recently married Lord Hastings, be-

came Lucy, Countess of Huntingdon. Of the poem on the *Immortality of the Soul*, which so deeply impressed Sir John Davys's generation, a fragment of quotation may suffice :

I know my body's of so frail a kind  
 As force without, fevers within can kill ;  
 I know the heavenly nature of my mind ;  
 But 'tis corrupted both in wit and will.

I know my soul hath power to know all things,  
 Yet is she blind and ignorant in all ;  
 I know I am one of Nature's little kings,  
 Yet to the least and vilest things am thrall.

I know my life's a pain and but a span,  
 I know my sense is mocked with everything ;



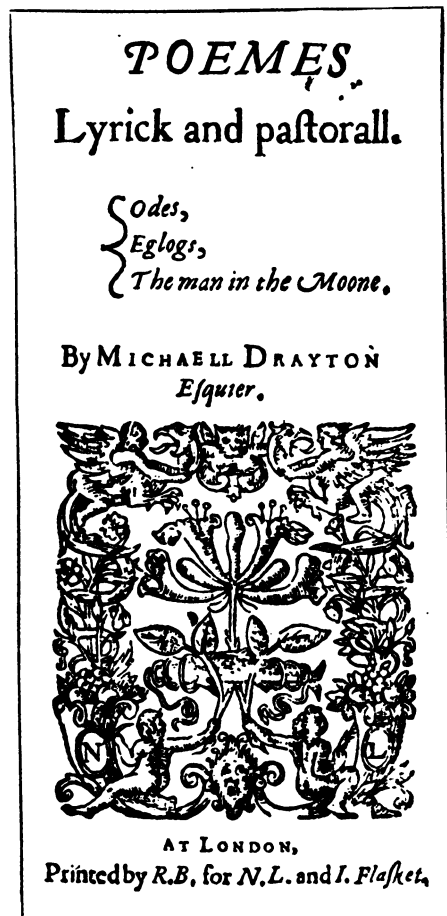
And, to conclude, I know myself a MAN—  
Which is a proud, and yet a wretched thing.

Either Davys or Daniel might easily have given his talent all to prose. Their friend and companion, MICHAEL DRAYTON, was not a better poet, but he was much more persistently devoted to the cultivation of the art of verse, and regarded himself as absolutely consecrated to the Muses. During a life

more prolonged than that of most of his contemporaries, he never ceased to write — feverishly, crudely, copiously, very rarely giving to his work that polish which it needed to make it durable. Of his lyrical vocation there could be no doubt; yet, if Daniel and Davys were prose-men who wrote poetry, Drayton was a prosaic poet. His masterpiece of topographical ingenuity, the *Poly-Olbion*, a huge British gazetteer in broken-backed twelve-syllable verse, is a portent of misplaced energy. In his earlier historical pieces Drayton more closely resembles Daniel, whom, however, he exceeds in his lyrics as much as he limps behind him in his attempts at gnomic verse. Drayton writes like a man, and a few of his odes are still read with fervour; but his general compositions, in spite of all their variety, abundance, and accomplishment, fail to interest us; a prosy flatness spoils his most ambitious efforts. He helps us to comprehend the change which was to come in sixty years, and through Cowley he prophesies of Dryden. In his personal character and his attitude to literature, it is impossible not to be reminded by Drayton of Southey;

the Jacobean poet had the same confidence in his own powers, the same encyclopædic aims, the same fluency, hardness and manly strength, combined with a similar absence of charm. Unlike Southey, however, Drayton kept himself, through a long and busy life, almost exclusively to verse. His self-sufficiency was unshaken; his monument in Poets' Corner describes him as one who had but to "exchange his laurel for a crown of glory," and he describes himself, in *The Man in the Moon*, as a poet who had

By general voice, in times that then was, grown  
So excellent, that scarce there had been known  
Him that excell'd in piping or in song.



Title-page of Drayton's "Poemes," 1606

**Michael Drayton** (1563-1631) was born at Hartshill, in Warwickshire. At the age of ten, being already ambitious to be a poet, he is believed to have entered the family of the highly cultivated Sir Henry Goodyer, at Polesworth, as page. He became known to the Countess of Bedford and to Sir Walter Aston, who permanently befriended him. We know nothing of the details of his early life. Early in 1591 Drayton was preparing to publish his earliest volume, a

book of religious verse entitled *The Harmony of the Church*, when it was suppressed by the authorities, and one copy only has survived. In 1593 he published a volume of eclogues, entitled *Idea: The Shepherd's Garland*, in which he spoke of himself as Rowland, and described a love affair with a lady residing by the river Anker, in Warwickshire. This was further expanded in the sonnet-cycle of *Idea's Mirror* (1594). Drayton's publications now became very numerous. *Matilda* (1594), *Endimion and Phæbe* (1595 ?), *Mortimeriados*—afterwards revised as *The Barons' Wars*—(1596), and *England's Heroical Epistles*. Drayton's poetry, or else his person, was distasteful to King James, and when he laid his *Gratulatory Poem* at the feet of their arriving Majesties, the monarch, who had so graciously welcomed Daniel and Davys, rudely repulsed Drayton, whose work from this moment betrays a note of petulance and disap-



Title-page of Drayton's "Poly-Olbion," 1612

pointment. The royal disfavour, however, does not seem to have affected Drayton's popularity, which was very great. In 1605 he began to collect his poetical works, and they were reprinted with a frequency which proves them to have been welcome to the public. In 1606 appeared the *Poems Lyric and Pastoral*. Drayton was now occupied for many years by his masterpiece of antiquarian ingenuity, the famous *Poly-Olbion*, the first eighteen "songs" of which were issued, with maps, and with notes by Selden, in 1612; the remaining twelve "songs" being added in 1622. In 1627 Drayton issued a small folio volume comprising some of the most natural and delightful of his compositions, such as *The Battle of Agincourt*

(quite distinct from the ode of that name); *Nymphidia, or the Court of Faery*; *The Quest of Cynthia*; *The Shepherd's Sirena*; and *The Moon Calf*. His latest work was a rather grotesque collection of "nymphalls" or pastorals, called *The Muses' Elysium* (1630); this volume contained, however, some of the daintiest fairy poetry in the language. Drayton died in London on December 23, 1631, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The following sonnet, which is the most perfect thing that Drayton wrote, was published in 1619:

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part—  
 Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;  
 And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,  
 That thus so cleanly I myself can free.  
 Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,  
 And when we meet at any time again,  
 Be it not seen in either of our brows  
 That we one jot of former love retain.  
 Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath,  
 When, his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,  
 When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,  
 And innocence is closing up his eyes—  
 Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,  
 From death to life thou mightst him yet recover.

From the very lively adventure of the fair Queen Mab on her visit to the fairy knight Pigwiggin, in *Nymphidia*, the following stanzas may be quoted as a favourable example of Drayton's easier vein:

She mounts her chariot with a trice,  
 Nor would she stay for no advice,  
 Until her maids, who were so nice,  
 To wait on her were fitted;  
 But ran herself away alone;  
 Which when they heard, there was not one  
 But hasted after to be gone,  
 As she had been dis-witted.

Hop and Mop and Drab so clear,  
 Pip and Trip and Skip, that were  
 Unto Mab, their sovereign dear,  
 Her special maids of honour;  
 Fib and Tib and Pink and Pin,  
 Tick and Quick and Jill and Jin,  
 Tit and Nit and Wap and Win—  
 The train that waited on her.

Upon a grasshopper they got,  
 And, what with amble and with trot,  
 For hedge or ditch they sparèd not,  
 But after her did hie them:  
 A cobweb over them they throw,  
 To shield the wind if it should blow;  
 Themselves they wisely could bestow  
 Lest any should espy them.

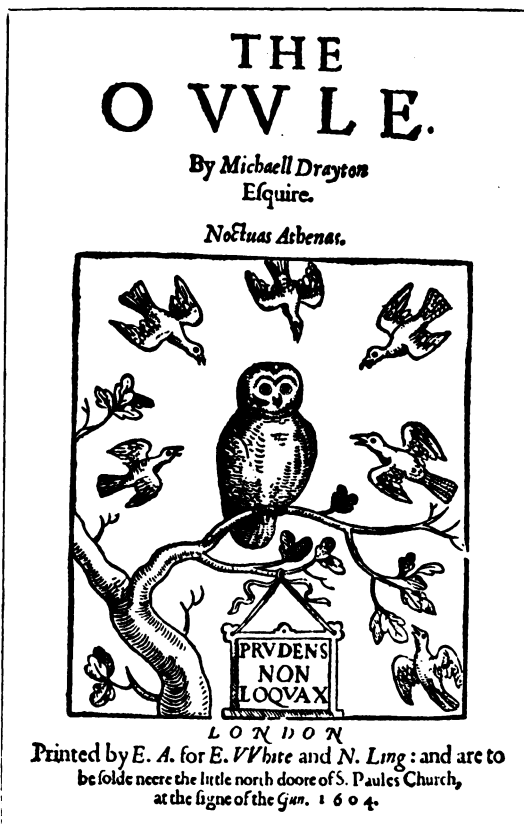
The closing years of the sixteenth century were marked by a curious attempt to introduce into English literature a school of satire founded on the imitation of Roman models. Narratives and diatribes directed against persons and institutions had, of course, always existed, and Spencer, in his

*The  
 Satirist*

*Mother Hubbard's Tale*, and Drayton in his *Owl* and his *Moon-Calf*, produced belated specimens of the mediæval satire of allegory. But as a species of social poetry closely modelled on the practice of Horace, Juvenal and Persius, satire was not comprehended in Europe until after the dissemination of Casaubon's criticism of the Latin poets. In English, the movement began in 1593, and it scarcely can be said to have survived 1599; it therefore belongs properly to the Elizabethan rather than to the Jacobean period. As, however, it was

principally cultivated by very young men, who became eminent for writings of a different character in later years, and as it possessed a tone eminently in contrast with the ideal and romantic colour of the earlier age, it is convenient to discuss it now.

The earliest of these Latin satires were those written, and widely circulated, but not printed, by Donne, who was twenty years of age when he composed the first three of his *Satires* in 1593. He was followed in composition, but preceded in publication, by Lodge, whose *Fig for Momus* belongs to 1595. Joseph Hall, whom we shall meet with again among the theologians, printed his books of *Virgidemiarum* in three instalments, in 1597-1599. Meanwhile Marston, the future dramatist, issued his satires, in two brochures, in 1598, and Edward Guilpin, of whom nothing more is known, his *Skialetheia* in the same year. These



Title-page of Drayton's "Owle," 1604

were the leaders among those who deliberately followed the model of Persius and Juvenal, and the result in the hands of these young poets of very various ultimate bias was curiously similar. These satires might almost be written by the same hand; it is difficult to distinguish a page of Marston from a page of Donne, or to decide at sight whether a certain passage is by Guilpin or by Hall. All of them cultivated a roughness which they supposed to be necessary in literature which should resemble "angry Juvenal" and "crabbed Persius." Hall said: "It is not for every one to relish a true and natural satire, being of itself both hard of conceit and harsh of style." This notion of satire, as of necessity obscure and elliptical, violent and "tart," lasted until Milton, with his superior scholarship, exposed it. The group of coarse,

fuscous poems, however, contains some very picturesque writing, and preserves for us a gallery of grotesque contemporary portraits. There is an example of Joseph Hall's rude irony :

O the fond boasting of vain-glorious man !  
Does he the best that may the best be seen ?  
Who ever gives a pair of velvet shoes  
To the Holy Rood, or liberally allows  
But a new rope to ring the curfew-bell,  
But he desires that his great deed may dwell  
Or graven in the chancel-window glass,  
Or in a lasting tomb of plated brass ?

Marston is often still more angry and more incoherent, and has not the same accent of sincerity :

Ay, Philo, ay ! I'll keep an open hall,  
A common, and a sumptuous festival :  
Welcome all eyes, all eyes, all tongues to me ;  
Gnaw, peasants, on my scraps of poesy !  
Castalios, Cyprians, court-boys, Spanish blocks,  
Ribbanded cars, granado-netherstocks,  
Fiddlers and scriveners, pedlers, tinkering knaves,  
Base blue-coats, tapsters, broad-cloth-minded slaves,  
Welcome, i' faith, but may you ne'er depart  
Till I have made your galléd hides to smart.

This would require a long commentary completely to explain its allusions, although it is one of Marston's less obscure passages. The darkness of allusion and crabbedness of style were intentional ; they were carried even further by Donne, of whom, however, it has to be said that while the satires of Hall were general invectives, and those of Marston and his group mainly fantastic libels against individuals, those of Donne were a series of humorous and sardonic portraits of types. This fact, and the eccentric violence of the poet's wilful versification, are exemplified in this picture of a walk in London streets with a young man of fashion :

Now leaps he upright, jogs me, and cries, " Do you see  
Yonder well-favoured youth ? " " Which ? " " O, 'tis he  
That dances so divinely." " O," said I,  
" Stand still ! Must you dance here for company ? "  
He droop'd ; we went, till one, which did excel  
Th' Indians in drinking his tobacco well,  
Met us. They talk'd. I whispered, " Let us go,  
It may be you smell him not ? Truly, I do ! "  
He hears not me, but, on the other side  
A many-coloured peacock having spied,  
Leaves him and me. I for my lost sheep stay ;  
He follows, overtakes, goes on the way.

With the writings of those satirists must be connected a work which, though in dialogue, has no real dramatic character. This is the curious trilogy of *Parnassus*, a satirical review of the condition of English poetry at the close of the sixteenth century, which provided Cambridge students with entertainment on successive Christmas Days. The third of these plays was printed, as *The Return from Parnassus*, in 1606 ; the other two were preserved





Title-page of John Dowland's "Booke of Songs," 1597

among Hearne's MSS. in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and first printed by Mr. W. D. Macray in 1886. The anonymous author, who was possibly John Day, seems to have been a Cheshire man. A certain Furor Poeticus is introduced

to ridicule and parody the extravagance of writers like Kyd, and the ranting Marstons and Tourneurs of a later generation. The *Parnassus* is not only valuable for its insight into University life, but it contains outspoken criticisms, from the scholar's point of view, of most of the poets of the time. The great actors, Burbage and Kempe, are introduced on the stage, and the latter gives an amusing professional opinion on the pieces which were being submitted to him for acting:

Few of the University [he says] pen plays well. They smell too much of that writer Ovid, and that writer Metamorphosis, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter. Why, here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down, ay, and Ben Jonson too. O, that Ben Jonson is a petulant fellow! He brought up Horace giving the poets a pill, but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit.

The reformation, or rather creation, of English song at the close of the reign of Elizabeth has been referred to in an earlier chapter. But its causes and the strange abruptness with which it came into full development remain imperfectly examined. What had caused it? No doubt the general efflorescence of feeling, the new enlightenment, the new passion of life, took this mode of expressing themselves, as they took others in other departments of intellectual behaviour. But this particular manifestation of tuneful, flowery fancy seems to have been connected with two artistic tendencies, the one the cultivation of music, the other the study of recent French verse. The former is the more easy to follow. The year 1588 had been the occasion of a sudden outburst of musical talent in this country; it is, approximately, the date of public recognition of the exquisite talent of Tallis, Bird, and Dowland, and the foundation of their school of national lute-melody. This species of chamber-music instantly became the fashion, and remained so for at least some quarter of a century. It was necessary to find words for these airs, and the poems so employed were obliged to be lucid, liquid, brief, and of a temper suited to the gaiety or sadness of the instrument. The demand created the supply, and from having been heavy and dissonant to a painful degree, English lyrics suddenly took a perfect art and sweetness. What is very strange is that there was no transition. As soon as a composer wanted a trill of pure song, such as a blackcap or a whitethroat might have supplied, anonymous bards, without the smallest training, were able to gush forth with—

*The Song  
Writers*

O Love, they wrong thee much  
That say thy sweet is bitter,  
When thy rich fruit is such  
As nothing can be sweeter.  
Fair house of joy and bliss,  
Where truest pleasure is,  
I do adore thee;  
I know thee what thou art,  
I serve thee with my heart,  
And fall before thee.

(a little miracle which we owe to Mr. Bullen's researches); or, in a still lighter key, with—

Now is the month of maying,  
 When merry lads are playing,  
 Each with his bonny lass,  
 Upon the greeny grass ;  
 The Spring, clad all in gladness,  
 Doth laugh at Winter's sadness,  
 And to the bagpipe's sound  
 The nymphs tread out their ground.

This joyous semi-classical gusto in life, this ecstasy in physical beauty and frank pleasure, recalls the lyrical poetry of France in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the influence of the *Pléiade* on the song-writers and sonneteers of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages is not questionable. It is, however, very difficult to trace this with exactitude. The spirit of Ronsard and of Remy Belleau, and something intangible of their very style, are discerned in Barnes and Drummond, but it would be dangerous to insist on this. A less important French writer, however, Philippe Desportes, enjoyed, as we know, a great popularity in England. Lodge says of him that he was "ordinarily in every man's hands," and direct paraphrases of the amatory and of the religious verse of Desportes are frequent.

The trick of this light and brilliant sensuous verse once learned, it took forms the most various and the most delightful. In the hands of the best poets it rapidly developed from an extreme naïveté and artless jiggling freedom to the fullest splendour of song. When Lodge, in 1590, could write—

Like to the clear in highest sphere,  
 Where all imperial beauty shines,  
 Of self-same colour is her hair,  
 Whether unfolded or in twines ;  
 Heigh ho, fair Rosaline !  
 Her eyes are sapphires set in snow,  
 Refining heaven by every wink ;  
 The gods do fear whenas they glow,  
 And I do tremble, when I think,  
 Heigh ho, would she were mine !

there was no technical lesson left for the English lyric to learn. But the old simplicity remained awhile side by side with this gorgeous and sonorous art, and to the combination we owe the songs of Shakespeare and THOMAS CAMPION, the pastorals of NICHOLAS BRETON, the marvellous short flights of verbal melody that star the music-books down to 1615 and even later. But then the flowers of English lyric began to wither, and the jewels took their place ; a harder, less lucid, less spontaneous method of song-writing succeeded.

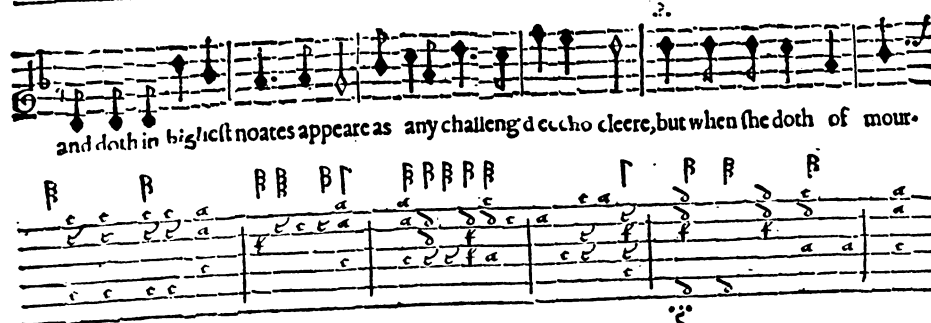
Of the early life of **Thomas Campion** (*d.* 1620) we know nothing, except that he was educated at Cambridge and was probably a member of Gray's Inn. In 1591 a wonderful lyric, containing the stanzas :

In myrtle arbours on the downs,  
 The fairy-queen Proserpina,  
 This night by moonshine leading merry rounds,  
 Holds a watch with sweet love  
 Down the dale, up the hill ;  
 No plaints or groans may move  
 Their holy vigil.

*Thomas  
 Campion.*



## VI.



And as her lute doth live or die,  
Led by her passion, so must I,  
For when of pleasure she doth sing,  
My thoughts enjoy a sodaine spring,  
But if she doth of sorrow speake,  
Eu'n from my hart the strings doe breake.

**C 2**

A page of Music from Campion's "Book of Ayres," 1601

All you that will hold watch with love,  
 The fairy-queen Proserpina  
 Will make you fairer than Dione's dove ;  
 Roses red, lilies white,  
 And the clear damask hue  
 Shall on your cheeks unite :  
 Love will adorn you,

appeared anonymously in an appendix to the *Astrophel and Stella* of Sidney. This was a very characteristic specimen of Campion's writing, who in 1595 published a volume of Latin *Poemata*, in which the author's preoccupation with the art of music is betrayed. The poet, however, had before this become a physician, and seems to have practised with success. His songs were published in successive *Books of Aires*, the first of which appeared in 1601, with the music, which was composed by the author himself and by Philip Rossiter the lutenist. Campion was a theorist on prosody, and in 1602 published prose *Observations on the Art of English Poesy*, in which he attacked "the vulgar and unartificial (*i.e.*, inartistic) custom of rhyming." Daniel and Ben Jonson wrote replies to this pamphlet. Later, Campion began to compose masques, and became second only to Jonson in this delicate exercise. That entitled *The Lords' Masque* (1613) contains the following song, to which the stars, summoned by Prometheus and Orpheus, "moved in an exceeding strange and delightful manner" in response to a neat mechanical artifice of Inigo Jones :

Advance your choral motions now,  
 You music-loving lights ;  
 This night concludes the nuptial vow—  
 Make this the best of nights :  
 So bravely crown it with your beams  
 That it may live in fame  
 As long as Rhenus or as Thames  
 Are known by either name.

Once more again, yet nearer move  
 Your forms at willing view ;  
 Such fair effects of joy and love  
 None can express but you.  
 Then revel midst your airy bowers  
 Till all the clouds do sweat,  
 That pleasure may be poured in showers  
 On this triumphant seat.

Long since hath lovely Flora thrown  
 Her flowers and garlands here :  
 Rich Ceres all her wealth hath shown,  
 Proud of her dainty cheer.  
 Changed, then, to human shape, descend,  
 Clad in familiar weed,  
 That every eye may here commend  
 The kind delights you breed.

Mr. Bullen believes that Campion wrote the *Entertainment at Brougham Castle* of 1618. He was now near the end of his career, for he died in London, probably of the plague, on March 1, 1620, and was buried the same day at St. Dunstan's-in-the-West. Campion was almost unknown, until, in 1887, Mr. Bullen revealed



to us the beauties of one of the most admirable song-writers of his age ; the same historian has edited the works of Campion in 1889, and again in 1903.

**Nicholas Breton** (1542 ? -1626 ? ) was the son of William Breton, a London tradesman, connected with a good Essex family, and claiming the title of " gentleman." He was educated at Oriel College, Oxford ; his father died early, and his mother married again, making the poet George Gascoigne her son's stepfather. As early as 1577 Breton began to publish, and he was the author of more than fifty separate collections of prose and verse, many of which are lost. Breton was in the service of Sir Philip Sidney until his death, and then in that of the Countess of Pembroke. He appears to have grievously offended her, and to have fallen in consequence into miserable indigence, " going up and down like a shadow without substance, a purse without money, and a body without spirit." About the year 1601, however, she seems to have forgiven him, and he went on writing serenely until 1626, the year of the publication of his *Fantastics*, when he disappears. His artless, diffuse, and easy grace in lyric pastoral is seen at its best in *The Passionate Shepherd* of 1604, and in such songs as :

Good Muse, rock me asleep  
With some sweet harmony ;  
This weary eye is not to keep  
Thy wary company.

Sweet Love, be gone awhile !  
Thou knowest my heaviness ;  
Beauty is born but to beguile  
My heart of happiness.

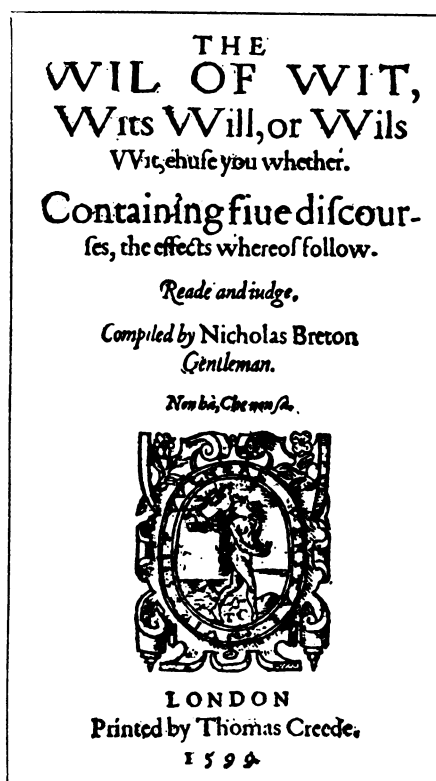
See how my little flock,  
That loved to feed on high,  
Do tumble headlong down the rock,  
And in the valley die.

The bushes and the trees,  
That were so fresh and green,  
Do all their dainty colour leese [lose],  
And not a leaf is seen.

The blackbird and the thrush,  
That made the woods to ring,  
With all the rest, are now at hush,  
And not a note they sing.

The publication of the *Faery Queene*, with its languid passion and voluptuous romance, produced a very vivid influence on the minds of several young poets, who received the stamp of Spenser's genius in their adolescence, and did

*The School  
of Spenser*



Title-page of Nicholas Breton's "The Will of Wit," 1599

not lose it in their advancing years. The great charm of the stanza which Spenser had invited,—“a measure,” as Shelley said long afterwards, “inexpressibly beautiful,” fascinated several of these youthful poets, but, with the metrical restlessness of the age, none of them were content to accept it as Spenser had left it, in the brilliancy and magnificence of its perfection. They introduced modifications of it, leaving out one line (as Giles Fletcher and

## A Murmurer.



LONDON  
Printed by ROBERT RAYVORTH, and  
are to be sold by *John Wright*, at his  
shop near Christ Church  
gate. 1607.

Title-page of Nicholas Breton's  
“A Murmurer.” 1607

the author of *Britain's Ida*), or the two central lines of the stanza (as in *The Purple Island*); or, while retaining the nine lines, slightly rearranging the rhymes (as Phineas Fletcher in the *Piscatory Eclogues*). These alterations, however, left Spenser's noble stanza,—the Chaucerian narrative stanza enlarged by an alexandrine,—the aim and model of their style. With this, all these poets endeavoured to reproduce, without direct imitation but in harmony with their individual talent, the sumptuousness and magic of their model. Their sense of beauty, however, was in no case so pure as it had been in Spenser, and these interesting writers display the tendency towards decay which was already, early in the reign of James I., threatening to invade English poetry. They are uplifted in imagination, but their fancy takes shorter and abrupt flights, and they are easily diverted by what is extravagant and preposterous. Their love for what is comely and noble raises them often to genuine heights, from

which they suddenly descend into tastelessness.

In this group of the disciples of Spenser, the predominant talent is that of GILES FLETCHER, to whom, indeed, the rarer quality of genius can scarcely be denied. He was the author of the finest religious poem produced in England between the *Vision of Piers Plowman* and *Paradise Lost*. In several passages of his fourfold *Christ's Victory and Triumph*, Giles Fletcher solved the difficult problem of how to be at once gorgeous and yet simple, majestic and yet touching. At his apogee he surpasses his very master, for his imagination lifts him to a spiritual sublimity. In the beatific vision in his fourth canto we are reminded of no lesser poem than the *Paradiso* :

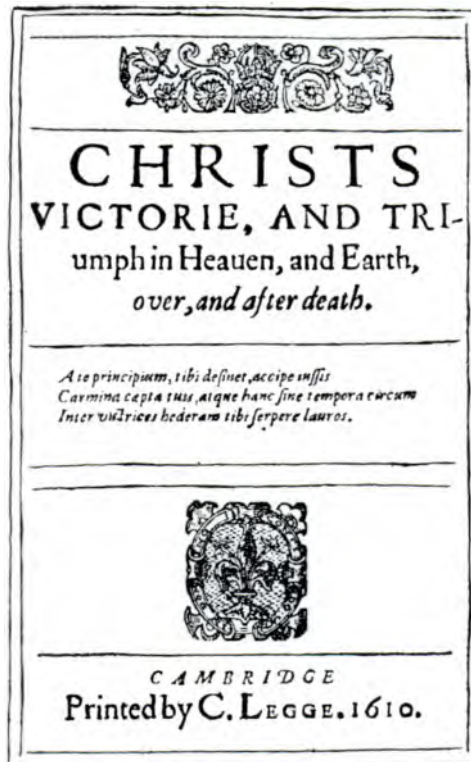
Toss up your heads, ye everlasting gates,  
And let the Prince of Glory enter in !  
At whose brave volley of siderial states  
The sun to blush and stars grow pale were seen ;  
When leaping first from Earth he did begin

To climb his angel's wings. Then, open hang  
Your crystal doors! so, all the chorus sang  
Of heavenly birds, as to the stars they nimbly sprang.

Hark! how the floods clap their applauding hands;  
The pleasant valleys singing for delight;  
The wanton mountains dance about the lands,  
The while the fields, struck with the heavenly light,  
Set all their flowers a-smiling at the sight;  
The trees laugh with their blossoms, and the sound  
Of the triumphant shout of praise that crowned  
The flaming Lamb, breaking through Heaven, hath passage found.

Out leap the antique patriarchs, all in  
haste,  
To see the powers of Hell in triumph  
led,  
And with small stars a garland inter-  
chased  
Of olive-leaves they love, to crown  
His head,  
That was before with thorns dis-  
gloried:  
After them flew the prophets, brightly  
stoled  
In shining lawn, and wimpled manifold,  
Striking their ivory harps, strung all  
in chords of gold.

To which the saints victorious carols  
sung,  
Ten thousand saints at once; that  
with the sound  
The hollow vault of heaven for triumph  
rung;  
The cherubim their clamours did con-  
found  
With all the rest, and clapped their  
wings around;  
Down from their thrones the domina-  
tions flow,  
And at His feet their crowns and  
sceptres throw,  
And all the princely souls fell on  
their faces low.



Title-page of Giles Fletcher's  
"Christ's Victorie," 1610

The sonorous purity and elevation of Giles Fletcher at his best give more than a hint of the approaching Milton, who was himself to belong, in his early youth and particularly in his odes, to the group of Spenserians. In *Christ's Victory and Triumph* we find the widely popular Spenserian tradition at its highest. It is right to say that these splendours are not sustained, and that Giles Fletcher is often florid and sometimes merely trivial. PHINEAS FLETCHER is still more open to censure in matter of taste, and although in his way a genuine poet, never rises to his brother's white heat of imagination. His famous *Purple Island* is really a work of the decadence, and, although vivacious, varied and marvellously ingenious, is a hopeless attempt to embroider

with beautiful language and fantastic images a theme—the physiology of the human body—which is radically grotesque and arid as a subject for poetry. Another Spenserian of looser and more languid talent was WILLIAM BROWNE, who adopted a fluid pastoral sweetness and wrote mainly in the heroic couplet. He is most to be valued for his occasional felicities, his happy vignettes of country life, his touches of landscape. But his unfinished masterpiece, *Britannia's Pastorals*, is incoherent, and sometimes mawkish.

The Fletchers were a family largely endowed with literary talent. Richard Fletcher, of Cranbrook, had two sons, each of whom became eminent. Of these one was Richard (*d.* 1596), who was Mary Queen of Scots' chaplain at Fotheringay, and who died Bishop of London; his son was John Fletcher, the famous playwright. The brother of the bishop was Giles Fletcher the elder (1549–1611), who went as envoy to Russia, printed a dangerous and able book on that country in 1591, and appeared in 1593 among the sonnet-writers as the author of a cycle entitled *Licia*. He married Joan Sheafe, and their two sons were the leaders of the Spenserian school. The elder, **Phineas Fletcher** (1582–1650), was born at Cranbrook on April 8, 1582, was educated at Eton, and became a scholar of King's College, Cambridge, in 1600. He resided at the University for sixteen years, having been elected a fellow of his college. After acting as chaplain in the Willoughby household for some time, Phineas Fletcher settled down in Norfolk for the rest of his life as Rector of Hilgay, where he died towards the close of 1650. It is unexplained why he did not publish his poems, which bear the impress of youth, until late in life. But his earliest publication, the *Locustæ*, belongs to 1627, and the *Sicelides* to 1631. Finally, his important works, *The Purple Island* and the *Piscatory Eclogues*, were delayed until 1633. An idea of the forms by which Phineas is principally known may be given by a stanza from each of these writings. The following exemplifies the *Piscatory Eclogues*:

A fisher-boy that never knew his peer  
In dainty songs, the gentle Thomalin,  
With folded arms, deep sighs and heavy cheer,  
Where hundred nymphs, and hundred muses inn,  
Sank down by Camus' brinks; with him his dear  
Dear Thyrsil lay; oft-times would he begin  
To cure his grief, and better way advise;  
But still his words, when his sad friend he spies,  
Forsook his silent tongue, to speak in watery eyes.

While this is the stanza in which *The Purple Island* is composed:

The morning fresh, dappling her horse with roses,  
Vexed at the lingering shades, that long had left her  
In Tithon's freezing arms, the light discloses,  
And, chasing night, of rule and harm bereft her,  
The sun with gentle beams his rage disguises,  
And, like aspiring tyrants, temporises,  
Never to be endured, but when he falls or rises.

**Giles Fletcher**, the younger (1584?–1623?), was the brother of Phineas, and was probably born in London not later than 1584. He was sent early to Westminster School, and thence in 1605 to Trinity College, Cambridge, by the generous kindness of the famous Dr. Thomas Neville, who was Master of that

college from 1593-1615. His earliest verses, which are of a rare maturity, and display already the stanzaic adaptation of the Spenserian form which Giles Fletcher was afterwards to make prominent, appeared in 1603 in a collection called *Sorrow's Joy*, of poems on the death of Queen Elizabeth. In this "canto" the youthful poet gives remarkable promise, as a single specimen may serve to show :

So let the loathèd lapwing, when her nest  
Is stolen away, not as she uses, fly,  
Cozening the searcher of his promised feast,  
But, widowed of all hope, still "Itys" cry,  
And naught but "Itys, Itys!" till she die.  
Say, sweetest quirester of the airy quire,  
Doth not thy "Tereu, Tereu!" then expire,  
When winter robs thy house of all her green attire ?

At Trinity College, where Giles Fletcher became a bachelor of divinity, he was famous for being "equally beloved of the Muses and the Graces." In 1610 he published the poem on which his fame rests, *Christ's Victory and Triumph in Heaven and Earth*; in spite of its transcendent beauties, it was coldly received, and was the object of "malicious tongues." But at least Milton read it. Fletcher, however, was discouraged, and about 1617 he exchanged his living in Cambridge for the rectory of Alderton, in Suffolk, where his "clownish and low-parted parishioners valued not their pastor according to his worth." Their stubbornness "disposed him to melancholy and hastened his dissolution." He issued no more verse, but a prose treatise of divinity, *The Reward of the Faithful*, in 1623. This dim record of the life of Giles Fletcher leaves upon us the impression of a man whose powers were early paralysed by the inexplicable neglect of his contemporaries.



Title-page of "Britannia's Pastorals," 1613

**William Browne** (1591? -1643) was born at Tavistock, and is believed to have belonged to an old Devonshire family, the Brownes of Browne-Illash. He was educated at Exeter College, Oxford, but left the University without a degree, entering Clifford's Inn, in London, as a law student. Thence he went over to the Inner Temple in the winter of 1611. In 1613 appeared the First Book of *Britannia's Pastorals*, a work in which the talent of a very young man is displayed in its crude exuberance. In 1614 Browne issued the collection of eclogues called



*The Shepherd's Pipe*, and in 1616 a Second Book of *Britannia's Pastorals*, dedicated to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, into whose service he had now entered; Anthony à Wood says that he settled at Wilton, where "he got wealth and purchased an estate," but this is doubtful. A William Browne, who may be the poet, was buried at Tavistock on March 27, 1643; but the widow of the latter did not obtain administration of his estate at Dorking until 1645. Browne was small in stature, and a favourite with his friends, among whom were Drayton and Selden. One of his most agreeable works, the *Inner Temple Masque*, remained in MS. until

1772, and a Third Book of *Britannia's Pastorals* until 1852. The following exquisite epitaph, first printed in 1658, and long attributed to Ben Jonson, is now known to be the work of Browne:

ON THE COUNTESS DOWAGER  
OF PEMBROKE

Underneath this sable hearse  
Lies the subject of all verse:  
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's  
mother:

Death, ere thou hast slain  
another,

Fair and learn'd and good as  
she,

Time shall throw a dart at  
thee.

It is difficult to find an appropriate place in our record for GEORGE WITHER, whose figure is very prominent from the reign of Elizabeth to that of Charles II., but so protean are its inconsistencies, and so violently various, that it belongs to a succession of



George  
Wither

George Wither

From the portrait by John Payne in the "Emblemes" 1634

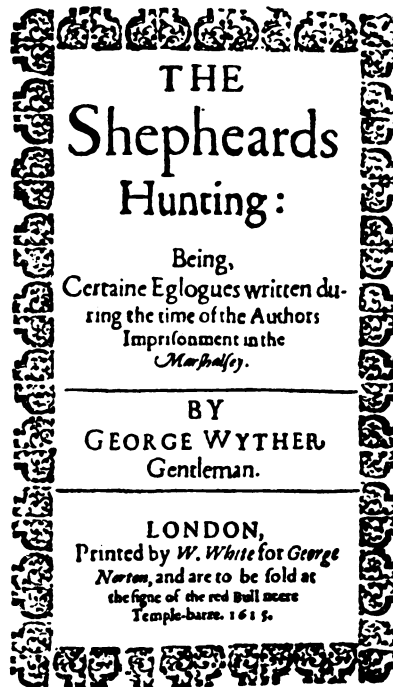
periods rather than to any one. For convenience, however, we may consider the poems of Wither in succession to those of the disciples of Spenser, with whom he preserved close relations for some time. At his best Wither is a lyric poet of very remarkable freshness, brightness and charm; at his worst he is a poetaster pouring forth absolute trash. In no writer in our literature do we meet with such violent extremes of merit, and Wither appears to have been devoid, not indeed of genius, but of the rudiments of a controlling taste. Moreover, during his long life he showed himself sensitive without intelligence to the trend of popular feeling, so that when the public demanded airy and exquisite pastoral songs, about 1610, Wither could pro-

duce them ; and when, after the Restoration, all sense of style and dignity was lost in popular verse, Wither could, with absolute complacency, publish doggerel such as his *Tuba Pacifica* and his *Sighs for the Pitchers*. His life was so long, his works so extremely numerous and their value so irregular, that the best critical opinion has always separated the chaff from the grain before beginning to estimate Wither's value. This being done, he appears as the author, between 1612 and 1630, of a number of little books of verse, containing eclogues, songs and epistles of great picturesqueness, occasionally rising into really eminent beauty. In this mood, Wither knows that

... though all the world's delight forsake  
me,  
I have a Muse, and she shall music make  
me :  
Whose very notes, in spite of closest cages,  
Shall give content to me and after ages.

But the irregularity of his inspiration is remarkable even in his earliest works, where, as has been said, the purple passages are often stitched into a ground of the coarsest sacking. The faults of Wither were repeated by FRANCIS QUARLES, the extremely popular writer of scriptural paraphrases, epitaphs and emblems, in whom the prosaic qualities of the seventeenth century first appear in their open and pronounced form. Slovenly and tasteless as Quarles was, he had nevertheless a vigour and homely wit, which should save him from absolute ridicule. His ardour did not always betray him into the grotesque, and he is occasionally dignified as well as spirited. The majority of his writings, however, are disfigured by the most preposterous faults of style, and awaken something like bewilderment in a reader who recollects that they were written by a man who was born before Spenser died.

**George Wither** (1588-1667) was born at Bentworth, in Hampshire, on June 11, 1588. His parents, who were in easy circumstances, sent him to the village school of Colemore, and then to Magdalen College, Oxford. He went back to Bentworth, and, whatever that may mean, "to the plough." But about 1612 he went up to London, and began to devote himself to literature, and in 1613 was imprisoned in the Marshalsea for printing his satire called *Abuses Stript and Whipt*. While in prison he wrote *The Shepherd's Hunting* and *Fidelia*, two of his most successful works, each published in 1615. *The Mistress of Philarete*



Title-page of Wither's "Shepheards Hunting," 1615

belongs to the same period, but was not printed until 1622. In this poem occurs the description of the poet's Hampshire home, and in particular of Alresford Pool :



**George Wither**

*After the portrait by W. Holle*

There, grassy plots set round about with flowers ;  
Here you might, through the water, see the land  
Appear, strewn o'er with white or yellow sand.  
Yon, deeper was it ; and the wind, by whiffs,  
Would make it rise, and wash the little cliffs ;  
On which, oft pluming, sate, unfrighted than,  
The gagging wild-geese and the snow-white swan,  
With all those flocks of fowls which, to this day,  
Upon those quiet waters breed and play.

At the breaking out of the Civil War, Wither's sympathies were originally on the side of the King, and he led a regiment of cavalry against the Scotch Covenanters.

Two pretty rills do meet, and  
meeting make  
Within one valley a large silver  
lake ;  
About whose banks the fertile  
mountains stood  
In ages pass'd, bravely crowned  
with wood ;  
Which, lending cold, sweet  
shadows, gave it grace  
To be accounted Cynthia's  
bathing-place ;  
And from her father Neptune's  
brackish court  
Fair Thetis thither often would  
resort,  
Attended by the fishes of the  
sea,  
Which in these sweeter waters  
come to play.  
There would the Daughter of  
the Sea-god dive ;  
And thither came the land-  
nymphs, every eve,  
To wait upon her, bringing for  
her brows  
Rich garlands of sweet flowers  
and beechy boughs.  
For pleasant was that pool, and  
near it there  
Was neither rotten marsh nor  
boggy fen.  
It was not overgrown with  
boisterous sedge,  
Nor grew there rudely, then,  
along the edge,  
A bending willow nor a prickly  
bush,  
Nor broad-leaved flag, nor reed,  
nor knotty rush,  
But here, well-ordered, was a  
grove with bowers,



But he was a Puritan by conviction, and in 1642 he definitely came over to the Parliamentary side, and was made Governor of Farnham Castle. His literary productions became more numerous than ever, but they consisted either of hymns and religious exercises or of violent political diatribes. He cultivated the extravagant nomenclature of the day, and the titles of his later pamphlets vary from *Opo-balsamum Anglicanum* to *Salt upon Salt*. His violence grew with years, and the Restoration deprived his temper of its last shred of self-control. He was imprisoned in Newgate for libel in 1660, and left there, as being out of harm's way, for several years. He was infinitely active with the pen, however, during this period, and published nine or ten volumes while he was in prison. He was released at last, and died obscurely in London, being close upon his eightieth year, on May 2, 1667.



Title-page of Wither's "Juvenilia," 1622



Francis Quarles

From an engraving by Alais

**Francis Quarles** (1592-1644) was a gentleman of good family, born at the manor-house of Stewards, in Essex, in May 1592. He was early left an orphan, and was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, afterwards entering Lincoln's Inn. When the Princess Elizabeth married the Palatine and proceeded to Germany in 1613, Quarles accompanied her as cup-bearer, and appears to have lived abroad in her service for several years. In 1620, however, he was back in London, and published *A Feast for Worms*, a metrical version of the book of Jonah. His publications now became exceedingly numerous, and among the most popular of them were *Sion's Sonnets* (1625), *Argalus and Parthenia* (1629),

and *Emblems* (1634-1635). It is not known at what date previous to 1629 Quarles became the private secretary to Archbishop Ussher in Ireland. He was appointed Chronologer to the city of London in 1639, and from the outbreak of the war to the end of his life was a fervent royalist. He defended Charles I. with such ardour that his MSS. were confiscated and burned and he himself was in much danger. His extreme popularity among Puritan readers, however, preserved Quarles

from personal attack, and he died in London before the struggle was decided on September 8, 1644, and was buried in the church of St. Olave, Silver Street. His solitary drama, the tragedy of *The Virgin Widow*, appeared posthumously in 1649. That homeliness of Quarles which so endeared him to his contemporaries may be exemplified by the following passage :

Even like the hawk, whose  
keeper's wary hands  
Have made a prisoner to  
her weathering stock,  
Forgetting quite the power of  
her fast bands,  
Makes a rank bate from her  
forsaken block,  
But her too-faithful leash  
doth soon restrain  
Her broken flight, at-  
tempted oft in vain ;  
It gives her loins a twitch, and  
tugs her back again.

So, when my soul directs her  
better eye  
To heaven's bright palace,  
where my treasure lies,  
I spread my willing wings, but  
cannot fly ;

Earth hauls me down ; I cannot, cannot rise ;  
When I but strive to mount the least degree,  
Earth gives a jerk, and foils me on my knee ;  
Lord ! how my soul is rackt betwixt the world and thee !

Great God, I spread my feeble wings in vain ,  
In vain I offer my extended hands  
I cannot mount till thou unlink my chain ;  
I cannot come till thou release my bands .  
Which if Thou please to break, and then supply  
My wings with spirit, the eagle shall not fly  
A pitch that's half so fair nor half so swift as I.



Title-page of Quarles's "Argalus and Parthenia." 1629



Another isolated figure in the period we are now considering is **Fulke Greville**, afterwards the first Lord **Brooke** (1554-1628), who was a late survival from the chivalry of the early Elizabethan age. He had left his ancestral house of Beauchamp Court, in Warwickshire, at the age of ten, to enter Shrewsbury School, and had met a fellow pupil arriving on the same day, the young Philip Sidney. They were not divided in affection until Sidney died, although when the latter went to Oxford, Greville became a fellow commoner at Jesus College, Cambridge. The friends met again at the Court of Elizabeth, and there was added to their close confraternity another poet, Sir Edward Dyer, who was to die in 1607. The three were inseparable, and on one occasion when he had been for a moment divided from Dyer and Greville and was reunited to them, Sidney sang :

Welcome my two to me,  
The number best beloved ;  
Within my heart you be  
In friendship unremoved.  
Join hands and hearts, so let it be ;  
Make but one mind in bodies three.

Greville was the survivor of this romantic trinity. He adopted politics as a profession, and rose to high honours under Elizabeth, who greatly esteemed him. He was Secretary to the Principality of Wales for forty-five years, and in 1597 he was knighted. Fulke Greville rose to be Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1614, and was raised to the peerage, as Baron Brooke, in 1621. James I. gave him two magnificent and historic estates, Warwick Castle and Knoll Park. His end was mysterious ; he was stabbed in the back by a footman, in his bed-chamber while he was dressing, in September 1628 ; the



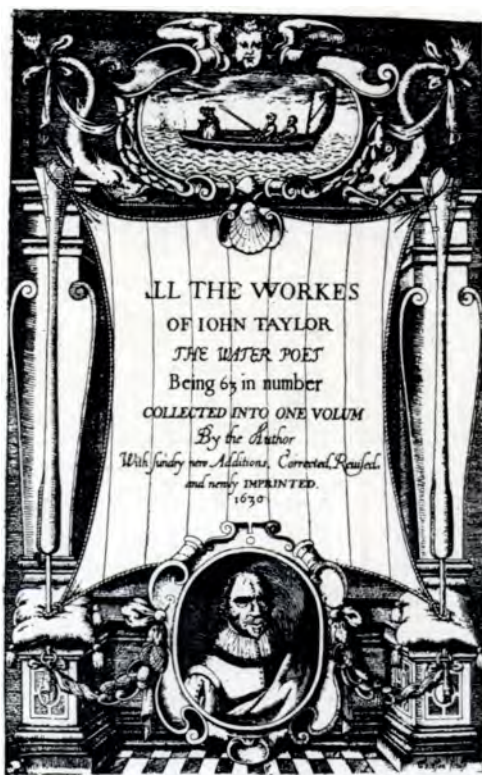
**Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke**

*After an original portrait*

murderer committed suicide before any explanation of his crime could be extracted from him. With the exception of a few verses in anthologies and the surreptitious edition of part of *Mustapha* in 1609, nothing of Lord Brooke's was published in his lifetime. It was not until 1633 that *Certain Learned and Elegant Works* appeared in folio ; this contained some philosophical " treatises " in verse, a cycle of sonnets entitled *Cælica*, and the two tragedies of *Alaham* and *Mustapha*. In 1652 was published Fulke Greville's belated *Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, and more philosophical poems in 1670. The poetry of Lord Brooke is extremely abstruse and obscure, harsh in construction, with what a contemporary critic called " a close, mysterious, and sententious way of writing." As far as we can judge, the earliest, and certainly the simplest, of his writings which we possess are the sonnets. Lamb said that his plays were " frozen " ; they have rhyme introduced into them, and move slowly under a burden of ripe and solemn thought. But Brooke neglects

lucidity, melody, and colour more resolutely than any other English poet of his rank, and his poems were obviously written, in proud disdain of public taste, to please no one but himself. The ingenuity of Lord Brooke is exemplified at its best in this quatorzain from *Cælica* :

Satan, no woman, yet a wandering spirit,  
 When he saw ships sail two ways with one wind,  
 Of sailors' trade he hell did disinherit—  
 The Devil himself loves not a half-fast mind.  
 The satyr, when he saw the shepherd blow  
 To warm his hands and make his pottage cool,  
 Manhood forswore and, half a beast, did know  
 Nature with double breath is put to school.  
 Cupid doth head his shafts in women's faces,  
 Where smiles and tears dwell ever near together,  
 Where all the arts of change give passion graces ;  
 While these clouds threaten, who fears not the weather ?  
 Sailors and satyrs, Cupid's knights, and I  
 Fear women that swear "Nay!" and know they lie.



*John Donne*

Title-page of the Works of the Water Poet

A poetical oddity of much voluble talent was **John Taylor** (1580–1653), called "The Water Poet," because he was a Thames waterman by profession; he was patronised by Ben Jonson and by the Court, and arranged the aquatic pageants which was a picturesque feature of the age. In the course of his life, the Water Poet issued nearly one hundred and thirty separate publications. He was a sort of public jester, and in 1620 was received in that capacity by the Queen of Bohemia, who entertained him at Prague. Taylor collected his queer doggerel into his "Works" in 1630. A certain interest, not wholly literary, attaches also to the poetry of Master **Patrick Hannay**, who was drowned at sea about 1629. His books were collected in 1622.

But a poet was in the field who was to sweep the pleasant flowers of the disciples of Spenser before him as ruthlessly as a mower cuts down the daisies with his scythe. In this age of mighty wits and luminous imaginations, the most robust and the most elaborately trained intellect was surely that of **JOHN DONNE**. Born as early as 1573, and associated with many of the purely Elizabethan poets, we have yet the habit of thinking of him as wholly Jacobean,

and the instinct is not an erroneous one, for he begins a new age. His poems were kept in manuscript until two years after his death in 1631, but they were widely circulated, and they exercised an extraordinary effect. Long before any edition of Donne was published, the majority of living English verse-writers had been influenced by the main peculiarities of his style. He wrote satires, epistles, elegies, sonnets, and lyrics, and although it is in the last mentioned that his beauties are most frequent, the essence of Donne, the strange personal characteristic which made him so unlike every one else, is redolent in all. He rejected whatever had pleased the Elizabethan age; he threw the fashionable humanism to the winds; he broke up the accepted prosody; he aimed at a totally new method in diction, in illustration, in attitude. He was a realist, who studded his writings with images drawn from contemporary life. For grace and mellifluous floridity he substituted audacity,

intensity, a proud and fulgorant darkness, as of an intellectual thundercloud. He thought to redeem poetry from triviality by a transcendental exercise of mental force, applied with violence to the most unpromising subjects, chosen sometimes merely because they were unpromising, in an insolent rejection of the traditions of plastic beauty. He conceived nothing



Title-page of Patrick Hannay's Poems, with portrait of the Author



less daring than a complete revolution of style, and the dethronement of the whole dynasty of modern verse, in favour of a new naturalism dependent solely on a blaze of intellect.

Unfortunately, the genius of Donne was not equal to his ambition and his force. He lacked the element needed to fuse his brilliant intuitions into a classical shape. He aimed at becoming a great creative reformer, but he succeeded only in disturbing and dislocating literature. He was the blind Samson in the Elizabethan gate, strong enough to pull the beautiful temple of Spenserian fancy about the ears of the worshippers, but powerless to offer them a

substitute. What he gave to poetry in exchange for what he destroyed was almost wholly deplorable. For sixty years the evil taint of Donne rested on us, and our tradition is not free from it yet. To him—almost to him alone—we owe the tortured irregularities, the monstrous pedantries, the alembicated verbiage of the decline. "Rhyme's sturdy cripple," as Coleridge called him, Donne is the father of all that is exasperating, affected, and "metaphysical" in English poetry. He represented, with Marino in Italy, Gongora in Spain, and Du Bartas and D'Aubigné in France, that mania for an inflamed and eccentric extravagance of fancy which was racing over Europe like a hideous new disease; and the ease and rapidity with which the infection was caught shows how ready



John Donne

*From a contemporary engraving by Lombart*

the world of letters was to succumb to such a plague. That Donne, in flashes, and especially in certain of his lyrics, is still able to afford us imaginative ecstasy of the very highest order—he has written a few single lines almost comparable with the best of Shakespeare's—must not blind us, in a general survey, to the maleficence of his genius. No one has injured English writing more than Donne, not even Carlyle.

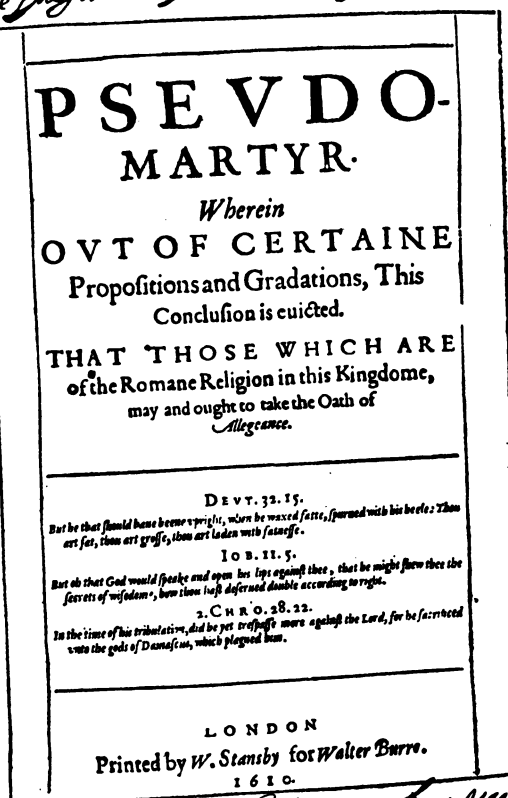
**John Donne** (1573–1631) was born in the parish of St. Nicholas Olave, in the City. He was the eldest son of a citizen and ironmonger of London of the same name, who died early in 1576, and left three children to the charge of their mother, Elizabeth Heywood, who was of the family of the great Sir Thomas More, and the daughter of John Heywood, the epigrammatist and writer of interludes. On both sides the family of Donne was Catholic, and during his childhood, his uncles Elizaüs (or Ellis) and Jasper Heywood, both men of literary attainments, were persecuted for their faith. Donne was so brilliantly precocious that it was said of him that "this age hath brought forth another Pico della Mirandola." In

October 1584 he and his younger brother Henry were entered at Hart Hall, Oxford. By advice from his Roman friends, he forebore to take a degree, and left the University in 1587, being then only fourteen years of age. He proceeded to Cambridge, where he took his degree; in 1590 removed to London and entered Lincoln's Inn in May 1592. His brother, Henry Donne, was arrested in May 1593 for harbouring a proscribed Catholic priest, and died of fever in prison. When, therefore, Donne came of age in 1594 he had to divide the very considerable fortune which his father had left with his mother and his sister, now Mrs. Copley.

He now began to examine the basis of his faith, and gradually left the Church of Rome; he "betrothed himself to no religion that might give him any other denomination than a Christian." He began to devote himself to poetry, and he made his maiden efforts in satire. The year 1593 is the date of his earliest exercises in this kind, of which some account has already been given. He did not publish anything at this time, and on June 1, 1599, the power of doing so was removed from him by an order from the Archbishop's court "that no Satires or Epigrams be printed hereafter." Donne engaged himself under the Earl of Essex for the Cadiz expedition in 1596 and that made to the Azores in 1597. His experiences in the latter are enshrined in two remarkable poems, *The Storm* and *The Calm*. Instead of returning from the Azores to England, Donne visited Spain and Italy, remaining "some years" in the South of Europe. There is here, perhaps, some exaggeration, for in the winter of 1597 Donne

was already settled in London, in York House, as private secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton (afterwards Lord Ellesmere), the Lord Keeper. It is probable that by this time, and during his years of wandering adventure, the greater part of Donne's lyrical poems had been composed. At the death of Lady Egerton, the Lord Keeper's niece, Anne More, came to conduct his household. She and Donne fell in love with one another, and at the close of 1601 they were secretly married. This business being disclosed, Sir George More, the father of the bride, demanded that Donne should be dismissed from his appointment and thrown into the Fleet Prison, where he lay for some weeks. He had recently

*de jure et major et cum la laja*



Tide-page of the "Pseudo-Martyr," 1610, with Donne's handwriting



completed a treatise in verse on the Pythagorean theory of metempsychosis, called *The Progress of the Soul*, which is one of the most brilliant and reckless of his writings, and the most lengthy of his existing poems. How Donne supported his wife and himself, and where he resided, from 1602 to 1605, is not clearly known, but during a part of this time they were the guests of Sir Francis Wooley at Pyrford. They moved in the last-named year to a small manor-house at Mitcham, a discomfortable and unhealthy dwelling. At this time and until 1607 Donne was helping Morton, long afterwards Bishop of Durham, in his controversies with the Catholics. When this work was ended, Morton proposed to his helper that he should enter the Church of England, in which he offered him instant promotion. This offer, however, Donne was not prepared to accept, and with "faint breath and perplexed countenance" thankfully declined it. His refusal did the more honour to the scrupulosity of his conscience in that, by some decay or early waste of his fortune, Donne was now reduced to the very straits of poverty. It was at the climax of sickness and indigence that he wrote, about 1608, the singular treatise on suicide called *Biathanatos*, in which, frankly confessing that the temptation to put an end to his life was often present with him, he tried to prove that "self-homicide is not so naturally sin that it may never be otherwise." At this juncture, however, Sir George More tardily forgave his daughter, and gave the Donnes a handsome allowance. In 1610 Donne published his prose treatise called *Pseudo-Martyr*, and in 1611 he wrote his curious squib against the Jesuits, called *Ignatius his Conclave*. To this time, also, may be attributed his two cycles of *Holy Sonnets*, in which the majesty of his sombre imagination is finely exemplified :

At the round earth's imagined corners blow  
Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise  
From death, you numberless infinities  
Of souls, and to your scatter'd bodies go ;  
All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,  
All whom war, death, age, agues, tyrannies,  
Despair, law, chance hath slain, and you, whose eyes  
Shall behold God, and never taste death's woe.  
But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space  
For, if above all these my sins abound,  
'Tis late to ask abundance of Thy grace,  
When we are there. Here on this lowly ground,  
Teach me how to repent, for that's as good  
As if Thou hadst seal'd my pardon with Thy blood.

In 1610 Sir Robert Drury became Donne's patron, and the poet published in 1611-12 two extravagantly transcendental elegies, *An Anatomy of the World*, in celebration of the knight's daughter, who had just died in her fourteenth year. In 1612 he went with Drury to Paris, but returned without any definite employment. "No man," he writes in 1614, "attends Court fortunes more impatiently than I do." But before that year was out the King had insisted on his taking holy orders, and in January 1615, Donne was ordained. He was, however, long disappointed of any promotion, and when his wife died, on August 15, 1617, her allowance ceased and Donne was left "a man of narrow, unsettled estate and the careful [anxious] father of seven children then living." After the death of Mrs. Donne, the poet "became crucified to the world," and adopted an ascetic mode of life which he preserved to the end. But he acceded to the invitation of the benchers

of Lincoln's Inn to become their Reader, and in 1619 he accompanied Lord Doncaster on his Embassy to Germany. In 1621 Donne was appointed Dean of St. Paul's, and he died on March 31, 1631, being buried in his cathedral, where a very curious portrait-statue of him, wrapped in a winding-sheet, still exists. He was the most powerful and splendid preacher of his time, "carrying some to heaven in holy raptures and enticing others to amend their life"; Izaak Walton compared him in the pulpit to an angel leaning from a cloud. The main part of Donne's writings were posthumously published—his *Poems* in 1633; his *Sermons* (with, in the first volume, a *Life* by Walton) in 1640, 1649, and 1661; his *Biathanatos* in 1634; his *Letters* in 1651. On one of the many occasions of his sudden departure on foreign travel, Donne addressed the following epistle to his wife:

Sweetest love, I do not go  
 For weariness of thee,  
 Nor in hope the world can show  
 A fitter love for me,  
 But since that I  
 At the last must part, 'tis best,  
 Thus to use myself in jest  
 By feignèd deaths to die.

Yesternight the sun went hence,  
 And yet is here to-day;  
 He hath no desire nor sense,  
 Nor half so short a way;  
 Then fear not me,  
 But believe that I shall make  
 Speedier journeys, since I take  
 More wings and spurs than he.

O how feeble is man's power,  
 That if good fortune fall,  
 Cannot add another hour,  
 Nor a lost hour recall;  
 But come bad chance,  
 And we join to it our strength,  
 And we teach it art and length,  
 Itself o'er us to advance.

When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not wind,  
 But sigh'st my soul away;  
 When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,  
 My life's blood doth decay.  
 It cannot be  
 That thou lov'st me as thou say'st,  
 If in thine my life thou waste,  
 That art the best of me.

Let not thy divining heart  
 Forethink me any ill;  
 Destiny may take thy part,  
 And may thy fears fulfil.  
 But think that we  
 Are but turn'd aside to sleep;  
 They who one another keep  
 Alive, ne'er parted be.

A couple of stanzas from *The Canonization* may exemplify the fiery violence of his early muse :

For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love !  
 Or chide my palsy, or my gout ;  
 My five gray hairs, or ruin'd fortune flout ;  
 With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve  
 Take you a course, get you a place,  
 Observe his Honour or his Grace,  
 Or the king's real, or his stamp'd face  
 Contemplate ; what you will, approve,  
 So you will let me love.



**William Drummond of Hawthornden**

*From an engraving by R. Gaywood*

Alas ! alas ! who's injured by my love ?  
 What merchant's ships have my  
 sighs drown'd ?  
 Who says my tears have over-  
 flow'd his ground ?  
 When did my colds a forward spring  
 remove ?  
 When did the heats which my  
 veins fill  
 Add one more to the plaguey bill ?  
 Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find  
 out still  
 Litigious men, which quarrels move,  
 Tho' she and I do love.

While literature, and particularly poetry, flourished with such magnificence in the English dominions of King James, the removal of the seat of government to London seems to have starved intellectual effort north of the Tweed. To the Scottish ballads, which form an independent group of compositions of high national importance, attention has already been given. The literary graces now generally cultivated in Scotland were those which were in fashion in England and France ; we look in vain for what can be

considered an independent Scots movement at this juncture. Du Bartas, in the translations of Joshua Sylvester, was greatly admired in Edinburgh, and the influence on current Scottish verse came from him and in a less measure from Spenser. Sir Robert Ayton, who wrote English with studied elegance, abandoned the vernacular altogether ; the surviving poems of the Earl of Ancrum fail to justify the reputation he enjoyed as a sonneteer ; and the Earl of Stirling, though preferred by his Scottish contemporaries to Tasso, is a

pedantic and lumbering writer. The best of all the Scotch poets of this age, by far, is WILLIAM DRUMMOND of Hawthornden, who had studied Sidney and Ronsard, but had, peculiar to himself, a rich note of solemn music, which he exercised in sonnets, madrigals and canzones of genuine value. He had the honour of attracting the notice of Milton, who borrowed with slight adaptation Drummond's

Immortal Amaranthus, princely Rose,  
Sad Violet, and that sweet flower that bears  
In sanguine spots the tenour of our woes.

There is beauty, but no great elevation in the poetry of Drummond; it is sensuous, uniform, and dyed with gorgeous colours. Its fault is a certain studied artificiality, and a tendency to give way, prematurely, to that mania for violent and tasteless imagery which was already invading the Italian and Spanish writers whom Drummond was among the earliest in these islands to study.

**William Drummond** (1585-1649) belonged to one of the best families of Scotland, and claimed kinship, through Annabella, the Queen of Robert III., with the royal family. His father, Sir John Drummond, became gentleman-usher to James VI.; the poet was

the eldest son, and was born at his father's romantic house of Hawthornden on December 13, 1585. After taking his degree in the University of Edinburgh, Drummond proceeded in 1607 to Bourges, and thence to Paris, being absent on the Continent until he succeeded to the estates of Hawthornden in 1610. He published a fine elegy on the death of Prince Henry in 1613, and a volume of *Poems* in 1616. His *Forth Feasting*, a panegyric on the King, belongs to 1617. In the winter of 1618, Ben Jonson paid Drummond a long visit in Edinburgh and at Hawthornden, and the Scotch poet took invaluable notes of Jonson's conversation. Drummond's *Flowers of Sion* appeared in 1623, and to these religious poems was appended the admirable prose treatise called *The Cypress Grove*. He had suffered in his youth the misfortune of seeing his intended bride carried off by a fever just before their wedding-day, and he remained long inconsolable; but in 1632 he married a peasant-girl, the daughter of a village minister, who bore him nine children. Drummond was deeply attached to the royal house, and his death, which happened on December 4, 1649, is said to have been hastened by his excessive grief at the "martyrdom" of Charles I. The rich lyric strain of Drummond is exemplified in the canzone which opens thus:



**Hawthornden**

From Grose's "*Antiquities of Scotland*," 1789

Phœbus, arise,  
 And paint the sable skies  
 With azure, white, and red ;  
 Rouse Memnon's mother from her Tithon's bed,  
 That she thy carrier may with roses spread ;  
 The nightingales thy coming eachwhere sing ;  
 Make an eternal spring !  
 Give life to this dark world which lieth dead !  
 Spread forth thy golden hair  
 In larger locks than thou wast wont before,  
 And, emperor-like, decore  
 With diadem of pearl thy temples fair.



William Drummond of Hawthornden

*After the portrait by C. Janssen*

The best of Drummond's sonnets are among the most dignified productions of the Jacobean age. Those *To My Lute* and *To a Nightingale* are in all the anthologies. This is less familiar :

As, in a dusky and tempestuous night,  
 A star is wont to spread her locks  
 of gold,  
 And while her pleasant rays abroad  
 are roll'd,  
 Some spiteful cloud doth rob us of her  
 sight ;  
 Fair soul, in this black age so shin'd  
 thou bright,  
 And made all eyes with wonder thee  
 behold,  
 Till ugly Death, depriving us of light,  
 In his grim misty arms thee did  
 enfold.  
 Who more shall vaunt true beauty  
 here to see ?  
 What hope doth more in any heart  
 remain,  
 That such perfections shall his  
 reason reign,

If Beauty, with thee born, too died with thee ?  
 World, plain no more of Love, nor count his harms ;  
 With his pale trophies Death hath hung his arms.

At the close of the Elizabethan age the range of poetic interest began to be widened, and at the same time dangerous exotic influences were introduced by the circulation of very able translations, particularly from the French and the Italian. Several of these became almost classical, and were very frequently reprinted. Ariosto, in his *Orlando Furioso*, was presented to English readers by Sir John Harington; Tasso, in his *Godfrey of Bulloigne, or the Recovery of Jerusalem*, by Richard Carew and afterwards by Edward Fairfax; the popular *Divine Weeks and Works* of Du Bartas by Joshua Sylvester; above all Homer, in his entire works, was magnificently rendered by George Chapman. Each of these versions was a valuable gift to our literature and, in particular, the translation of Tasso by Fairfax, in which that gentleman proved himself to belong



to the Spenserian school of the Fletchers and Browne, was a fructifying and highly characteristic product of the period.

Chapman's translation, with what Charles Lamb called its "unconquerable quaintness," its deep sympathy with one or two aspects of the genius of Homer, and its splendid freedom and vigour of paraphrase, is a work which stands alone in the Jacobean age. Chapman employed, for the *Iliad*, an interesting rhymed couplet of fourteen feet, which is very effective when written with spirit. This is, indeed, so commonly spoken of as the general metre of Chapman's *Homer*, as to leave an impression upon us that those who praise this translation rarely proceed far in the reading of it. For Chapman soon became weary of his galloping couplet, and in the *Odyssey* and the *Hymns*, as well as in his version of Hesiod's *Days and Weeks*, he returned to the normal heroic measure. A fragment from the Eleventh Book of the *Iliad* may give an impression of his earlier treatment of the narrative :

High was the fury of his lance. But,  
 having beat them close  
 Beneath their walls, the both-worlds'  
 Sire did not again repose  
 On fountain-flowing Ida's tops, being  
 newly slid from Heaven,  
 And held a lightning in his hand ;  
 from thence the charge was given  
 To Iris with the golden wings :  
 "Thaumantia, fly," said he,  
 "And tell Troy's Hector that as long  
 as he enrag'd shall see

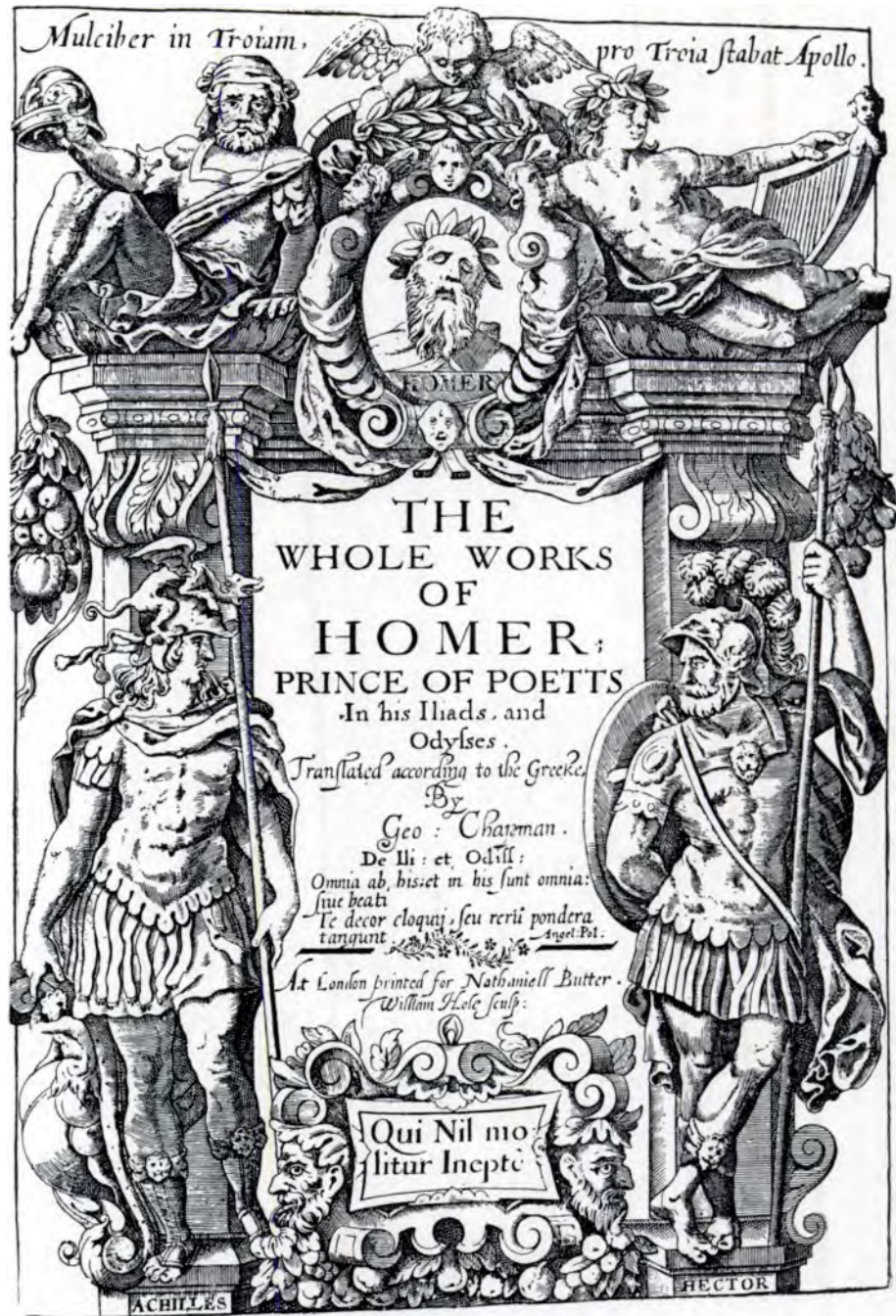
The soldier-loving Atreus' son amongst the foremost fight,  
 Depopulating troops of men, so long must he excite  
 Some other to resist the foe, and he no arms advance ;  
 But when he wounded takes his horse, attain'd with shaft or lance,  
 Then will I fill his arm with death, ev'n till he reach the fleet,  
 And peaceful night treads busy day beneath her sacred feet."  
 The wind-foot swift Thaumantia obey'd, and us'd her wings  
 To famous Ilion, from the mount enchas'd with silver springs,  
 And found in his bright chariot the hardy Trojan knight,  
 To whom she spake the words of Jove, and vanish'd from his sight.  
 He leapt upon the sounding earth, and shook his lengthful dart,  
 And everywhere he breath'd exhorts, and stirr'd up every heart.  
 A dreadful fight he set on foot. His soldiers straight turn'd head.  
 The Greeks stood firm. In both the hosts, the field was perfected.  
 But Agamemnon, foremost still, did all his side exceed,  
 And would not be the first in name unless the first in deed.

From this we may turn to Chapman's treatment of the *Odyssey*, where



Engraved portrait of Chapman

From the 1616 edition of "Homer"



Title-page of Chapman's "Homer," 1616

it is interesting to find him using the measure which Pope was to employ for the same purpose a hundred years later. Here is a fragment from the Fourth Book:



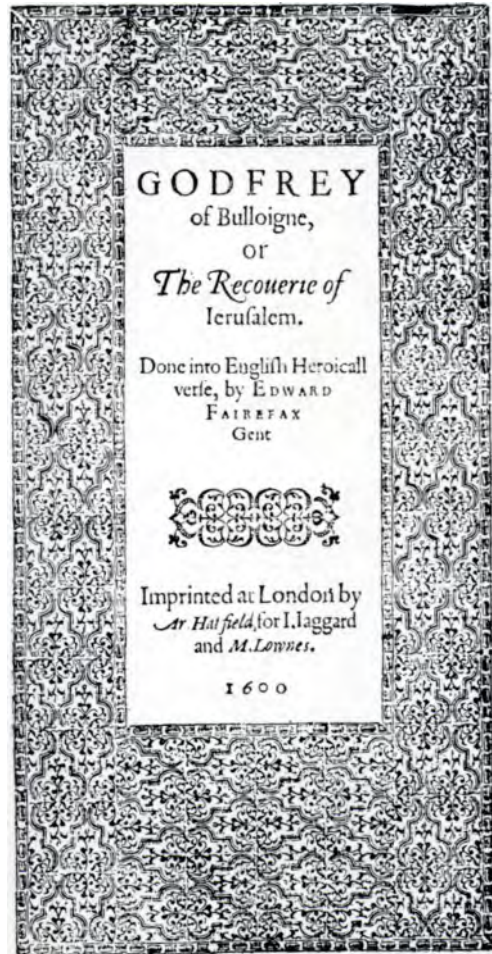
While this his thoughts disputed, forth did shine,  
 Like to the golden distaff-deck'd Divine,  
 From her bed's high and odoriferous room  
 Helen. To whom, of an elaborate loom,  
 Adrasta set a chair; Alcippe brought  
 A piece of tapestry of fine wool wrought;

Phylo a silver cabinet conferr'd,  
 Given by Alcandra nuptially endear'd  
 To Lord Polybius, whose abode in  
 Thebes  
 The Egyptian city was, where wealth  
 in heaps  
 His famous house held, out of which  
 did go,  
 In gift to Atrides, silver bath-tubs  
 two,  
 Two tripods, and of fine gold talents ten.  
 His wife did likewise send to Helen  
 then  
 Fair gifts, a distaff that of gold was  
 wrought,  
 And that rich cabinet that Phylo  
 brought,  
 Round, and with gold ribb'd, now of  
 fine thread full;  
 On which extended, crown'd with  
 finest wool  
 Of violet gloss, the golden distaff lay.

Chapman's enthusiasm for his subject was extreme; he asserted with a loud voice that "of all books extant in all kinds, Homer is the first and best." In early youth the magnificence of the Greek had impressed itself upon his imagination, and in his old age he was still rapturously contemplating "this full sphere of poesy's sweetest prime." He translated what others, and in particular Politian, had written in the praise of Homer, and his original epistles recur to the beloved theme.

At the suggestion of Bacon, and supported by the praise of Ben Jonson and Drayton, Chapman turned from Homer to the translation of Hesiod's *Book of Days*, but here his "Attic elocution" flags and fails him. His whole heart was with Homer, and Homer alone.

The publication of the *Jerusalem Delivered* of Torquato Tasso, and the sensational success which it had enjoyed throughout the Catholic world, had greatly excited interest in England, where Italian books seem to have had numerous readers. The earliest version, that of Richard Carew, was published here before the brief life of Tasso closed in darkness at San Onofrio;



Title-page of "Godfrey of Bulloigne," 1600

the second, that of EDWARD FAIRFAX, appeared only five years after that event, so that it was really an Italian contemporary to whom these English honours were paid. The version of Carew, of which only five cantos saw the light, was kept pedantically close to the original. The publisher, boasting of "how strict a course the translator hath tied himself in," printed the Italian text opposite each page further to emphasise the literalness. This determination

to be accurate makes Carew very stiff, and sometimes almost unintelligible; his translation is, at its worst, hardly more than a "crib" to Tasso. This is an example of it at its best:

Within few days this Dame her  
journey ends,  
There where the Franks their  
large pavilions spread,  
Whose beauty rare at his  
appearance lends  
Babbling to tongues, and  
eyes a-gazing led:  
As when some star or comet  
strange ascends,  
And in clear day through sky  
his beams doth shed;  
They flock in plumps this pil-  
grim fair to view,  
And to be wised what cause  
her thither drew.

Not Argos, Cyprus, Delos e'er  
present  
Patterns of shape or beauty  
could so dear;  
Gold are her locks, which, in  
white shadow pent,  
Eft do but glimpse, eft all  
disclos'd appear,  
As when new cleans'd we see  
the element,—  
Sometimes the sun shines  
through white cloud unclear,  
Sometimes from cloud out-gone,  
his rays more bright  
He sheds abroad, doubling of  
day the light.



Title-page of "Orlando Furioso," with  
portrait of Harington, by W. Rogers

To turn from Carew to Fairfax is to pass from a crabbed experiment to one of the most admirable transfusions of poetry from one language to another which has ever been achieved. Tasso's rich epic, with its embroidered episodes and its pictures of radiant chivalry, is genuinely transferred by Fairfax to the atmosphere of England. That he was so harmonious and "prevailing" a poet in translation is the more remarkable in that such specimens of his original

verse as have been preserved are without value. Fairfax existed only when he was guided by the magical genius of Tasso. A fragment of his description of Rinaldo at the Mount of Olives may here be given :

Thus prayèd he. With purple wings up-flew,  
In golden weed, the morning's lusty Queen,  
Begilding with the radiant beams she threw  
His helm, his harness, and the mountain green ;

*I offere this, that in all common recalted, the yowre and the sword will all, and  
that the p'den is about the sword, the that recalted above their helmets  
doe the same (though they know it not) confessing the saying, Cadant arma togæ.  
My Education hath bin such, and I trust my manners and spirit both are such  
as neither shall be forgotten to your service of my p'den and country, whether it  
be with sword or notapon; only my desire is my service may be accepted,  
and I doubt not, but it shall be acceptable to the saying, his: de: p' good  
country of mine, I would be a good stepp, and to that good country your  
honour commendation, I would be a good stepp, and to that good country your  
take my leave this 11th of August.*

*Your Honour most humble*

*John Haryngton.*

**Facsimile Letter from Haryngton to Lady Russell**

*British Museum, Lansdowne MS. 82*

Upon his breast and forehead gently blew  
The air, that balm and nardus breath'd unseen  
And o'er his head, let down from clearest skies,  
A cloud of pure and precious dew there flies.

The heavenly dew was on his garments spread,  
To which compared, his clothes pale ashes seem,  
And sprinkled so that all that paleness fled,  
And thence of purest white bright rays outstream :  
So cheer'd are the flowers, late wither'd,  
With the sweet comfort of the morning beam,  
and so, returned to youth, a serpent old  
Adorns herself in new and native gold.



The lovely whiteness of his changèd weed  
 The prince perceivèd well and long admired ;  
 Toward the forest march'd he on with speed,  
 Resolv'd, as such adventures great required ;  
 Thither he came, whence, shrinking back for dread  
 Of that strange desert's sight, he first retired ;  
 But not to him fearful or loathsome made  
 That forest was, but sweet with pleasant shade.



From the engraved portrait in the 1633 edition  
 of Du Bartas

**Richard Carew** (1555-1620) was born at East Anthony, in Cornwall, and was educated as a gentleman-commoner of Christ Church, Oxford. He disputed in public with Philip Sidney when they both were children; a little later Carew is associated as an antiquary with the historians Camden, Spelman, and Raleigh. He represented various Cornish boroughs in parliament, and in 1602 he published a valuable *Survey of Cornwall*. His first instalment of Tasso, called *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, was published at Exeter in 1594. Of the career of **Edward Fairfax** very little is known. He was probably the natural son of Sir Thomas Fairfax of Denton. Almost all his life was spent in delightful retirement in the forest of Knaresborough. His *Godfrey of Bulloigne* was printed first in 1600. It is believed that Edward Fairfax died in 1635. **Sir John Harington** (or **Haryngton**) (1561-1612) was a godson of Queen Elizabeth, and he translated the *Orlando*

*Furioso* of Ariosto in 1591, in obedience to her command. A very odd publication of Harington's in prose, the *Metamorphosis of Ajax*, 1596, which is partly a useful hygienic treatise and partly a savage Rabelaisian satire, deeply offended the Queen, and Harington was driven from Court. He cast in his lot with Essex, and shared his adventures and his disgrace. The *Epigrams* of Harington were much admired, and were collected, in 1613, after his death. He was no

Being mforced (through the grievous visitation of  
 Gods heavie hand, upon Your Highnes poore Citie of Lon-  
 don) thus long (& yet longer like) to deferre the Impres-  
 sion of my slender Labours (long since manst unto your  
 Ma<sup>ty</sup>) I thought it more then tyme, by some other  
 mean, to tender my humble Homage to your Highnes.  
 But wanting both leasure, in my self; & (here in the Country)  
 such helps, as I could have wished, To copie the entire  
 Worke (worthie your Ma<sup>ty</sup> reading) I was faine thus -  
 souldamie to scribble over this small Parte That (in -  
 the mean time) by a Part, I might (as it were) give  
 your Highnes Possession of the whole; untill it shall  
 please the Almighty, in his endles Mercie to give an  
 end to this lamentable Affliction, w<sup>ch</sup> for his deere Sonnes  
 sake I most earnestlie beseech him. & ever to protect your  
 sacred Ma<sup>ty</sup> & all your Royal Familie under the winges  
 of his gracious favour

Your Majesties

- most humble Subj<sup>t</sup>.

& devoted Servant,

Joshua Sylvester

- Letter from Sylvester to James I.

poet, but a man of great shrewdness of observation, prompt and cool in action, and of a ready wit. An immense popularity attended the versions of **Joshua**

**Sylvester** (1563-1618), who attached himself to the French poet Du Bartas, as Chapman did to Homer. Sylvester was the son of a Kentish clothier, and he was educated under Hadrianus Saravia at Southampton, and then at Leyden. He became a merchant-adventurer, and spent much time in the Low Countries. As early as 1591 he began to publish instalments of his immense version of *The Divine Weekes and Works* of Du Bartas, on which he was engaged all the rest of his life. In 1613 Sylvester became secretary to the great Merchants' Company at Middelburg, in Zealand, and there he died on September 28, 1618. His version of the French poet's Puritan epic long retained its popularity, and it is well known that Milton was intimately acquainted with it. *The Divine Weekes and Works*, whether in Du Bartas' French or in Sylvester's English, has now become intolerably tedious and unattractive; but the translator, had he concentrated his powers on a happier object, might have enriched



Title-page of Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas' "*Divine Weekes and Workes*," 1605

the language. This is an example of his work at its best :

Sweet Night, without thee, without thee alas!  
Our life were loathsome, even a hell to pass;  
For outward pains and inward passion still,  
With thousand deaths, would soul and body thrill.  
O Night, thou pullest the proud mask away  
Wherewith vain actors in this world's great play  
By day disguise them. For, no difference  
Night makes between the peasant and the prince,  
The poor and rich, the prisoner and the judge,  
The foul and fair, the master and the drudge,  
The fool and wise, Barbarian and the Greek,  
For Night's black mantle covers all alike.

## CHAPTER VIII

### JACOBEOAN DRAMA

THERE can be no question that in the first quarter of the seventeenth century the imaginative force of the English people ran so vehemently in a single channel, that all other manifestations of it are in danger of being regarded as side-streams or backwaters. As the man of fancy in the reign of Elizabeth had naturally turned to an amorous or pastoral lyric as the medium in which to express the passion which worked in him, so his successor in the reigns of James I. and Charles I. naturally produced a tragedy or a farcical tragi-comedy. The drama was the characteristic art of the age in England, and even if we omit Shakespeare from our consideration, as a figure too disturbing and overshadowing, the fact remains true that it was in the drama that Jacobean England displayed its main current of imagination.

By the end of the sixteenth century the question of the direction which English drama was to take was absolutely settled. The classical play, which had enjoyed so overwhelming a success in Italy and France, had been glanced at by our poets, gingerly touched and rejected as inappropriate and unsympathetic. Just as in France the inspiration of the dramatists had been from the first directly academic, so with us it was directly popular. The earliest modern plays in France, such as those of Jodelle and La Péruse, had been classroom entertainments, given in French in place of Latin, by actors who imitated the verses of Seneca in the vernacular instead of repeating them in the original. This was how French tragedy was formed, and on these lines it rose, smoothly and steadily, to Corneille and Racine. But we have seen that English tragedy was, from the first, a wild and popular entertainment, allied to the mediæval morality and to the mediæval farce rather than to anything that Aristotle could have legislated for or Scaliger have approved. The experiments of Fulke Greville, and still more of Samuel Daniel (who, like Jodelle, but half a century later than he, wrote a Senecan *Cleopatra* in choruses) may give us an idea of what our drama might have become if we had taken the same turn as the French.

By 1600, however, the question was finally settled. The taste for declamation, for long moral disquisitions in rhymed soliloquy, had been faintly started by a few University pedants and had been rejected by the public in favour of a loud, loose tragedy and a violently contrasted and farcical comedy. In England something of the same national disposition to adopt for the stage extravagant and complicated plots, which had been met with a few years

before in Spain, had determined the action of our theatrical poets. The tragedies of Argensola, the predecessor of Lope de Vega, are described by Mr. Fitzmaurice-Kelly as "a tissue of butcheries," and this poet was an exact contemporary of our carnage-loving Chapmans and Tourneurs. We see in Spain, although the Spanish drama has little positive resemblance to the Elizabethan, parallel lines of character which are not like anything which we meet with in the dramatic Renaissance of Italy or France. But whatever adaptations of the style of stage-plays might have seemed imminent about 1595, they were all swept away at the approach of the genius of Shakespeare. When a writer of superlative force takes the development of a branch of national literature under his sway, he bends it, in its superficial forms, to his will. Jacobean drama cannot be judged apart from the fact that the most illustrious poet of the world chose to make it his instrument.

But if Shakespeare determined, beyond any power of Latinising contemporaries to divert it, the line which the vast mass of Jacobean drama should take, his own relation to his fellow playwrights is confused by the fact that he towers immeasurably above them. He would illustrate his age much better, and form a much more useful guide to its intricacies, if he were not raised over it by such a mountainous elevation. One of the penalties of altitude is isolation, and in reviewing the state of literary feeling in England in the Jacobean times, we gain the impression that a child nowadays may be more familiar with the proportion between Shakespeare and his fellows than the brightest of these latter could be; since those highest qualities of his, which we now take for granted, remained invisible to his contemporaries. To them, unquestionably, he was a stepping-stone to the superior art of Jonson, to the more fluid and obvious graces of Beaumont and Fletcher. Of those whose inestimable privilege it was to meet Shakespeare day by day, we have no evidence that even Ben Jonson perceived the absolute supremacy of his genius. The case is rather curious, for it was not that anything austere or arrogant in himself or his work repelled recognition, or that those who gazed were blinded by excess of light. On the contrary, it seemed to his own friends that they appreciated his amiable, easy talent at its proper value; he was "gentle" Shakespeare to them; and they loved the man and they were ready to borrow freely from his poetry. But that he excelled them all in every poetical artifice, soaring above them all like an elm in a coppice of hazels, this, had it been whispered at the Mermaid, would have aroused smiles of derision. The elements of Shakespeare's perfection were too completely fused to attract vulgar wonder at any one point, and those intricate refinements of style and of character which now excite in us an almost superstitious amazement did not appeal to the rough and hasty Jacobean hearer. In considering Shakespeare's position during his lifetime, moreover, it must not be forgotten that his works made no definite appeal to the reading class until after his death. The study of "Shakespeare" as a book cannot date farther back than 1623.

To us, however, our closer acquaintance with Shakespeare must prove a disastrous preparation for appreciating his contemporaries. He rises out of all





BEN JONSON.  
AFTER A MINIATURE IN THE ROYAL LIBRARY AT  
WINDSOR CASTLE.



JOHN FLETCHER.  
AFTER A MINIATURE IN THE ROYAL LIBRARY AT  
WINDSOR CASTLE.



JOHN DONNE.  
AFTER A MINIATURE IN THE ROYAL LIBRARY AT  
WINDSOR CASTLE.



measurement with them by comparison, and we are tempted to repeat that unjust trope of Landor's in which he calls the other Jacobean dramatists mushrooms growing round the foot of the Oak of Arden. They had, indeed, noble flashes of the creative light, but Shakespeare walks in the soft and steady glow of it. As he proceeds, without an effort, life results; his central qualities are ceaseless growth. In him, too, characteristics are found fully formed which the rest of the world had at that time barely conceived. His liberality, his tender respect for women, his absence from prejudice, his sympathy for every peculiarity of human emotion—these are miraculous, but the vigour of his imagination explains the marvel. He sympathised because he comprehended, and he comprehended because of the boundless range of his capacity. The quality in which Shakespeare is unique among the poets of the world, and that which alone explains the breadth, the unparalleled vivacity and coherency of the vast world of his imagination, is what Coleridge calls his "omnipresent creativeness," his power of observing everything, of forgetting nothing, and of combining and reissuing impressions in complex and infinite variety. In this godlike gift not the most brilliant of his great contemporaries approached him.

The misfortune of the Jacobean dramatists who were not Shakespeare lay in their contentedness with the results of their very remarkable personal energy. Their love of extravagance betrayed them into shapelessness, their rebellious scorn of discipline into anarchy. But perhaps their most serious fault was one inherent in the system of dramatic composition which they had adopted. They fell away from the examination of sane and normal types of humanity, in which they suspected the presence of the hated academic spirit, and they devoted all their attention to the "humours" of violent exceptions and odd varieties of humanity. As the fire of passion sank, they endeavoured to stir its embers by a more and more bombastic and grotesque insistence on these "humours," losing at last, in their preposterous pursuit of farce, all touch with the delicate spirit of truth. In their confusion of plot, in their far-fetched imagery, in their jumble of circumstance and event, in their fantastic and unearthly caprices, in their violently contrasted outbreaks of vituperance and amorousness, we feel the minor Jacobean dramatists to present to us, with all the air of those who offer divine gifts, a medley of what is good and bad, of what is wholesome and stimulating, with what is decaying and distasteful.

The general criticism of the nineteenth century was indulgent to the faults and enthusiastic about the merits of the Jacobean dramatists. It was observed by Charles Lamb, Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt that for a hundred and fifty years the beauties of the contemporaries of Shakespeare had been unduly slighted; these critics set themselves to show in what manner those great men felt, "what sort of loves and enmities theirs were, how their griefs were tempered, and their full-swoln joys abated." No form of literature is more effectively presented by quotation than the drama of these Jacobean poets, and Charles Lamb, in 1808, dazzled all sensitive readers by the richness of the anthology he gathered from the English dramatists who lived about the

time of Shakespeare. Since the age of Lamb, the tone of criticism has been increasingly eulogistic, until in the lips of Mr. Swinburne it reached, in prose and verse, the proportions of a pæan. It can hardly be questioned that the critics of whom Mr. Swinburne is at once the most learned and the most inspired, who approach the minor writers of the age of James I. with such epithets as "unflawed" (Marston), "sweetest of all thy time save one" (Dekker), "a full-blown flower in heaven" (John Day), and who occupy themselves exclusively with the fugitive beauties and felicitous occasional audacities of their favourites, are unsafe guides for those who, in humdrum fashion, read the works of the authors so lauded, not in picturesque quotation, but steadily through as dramas representative of human life on a possible public stage. From Charles Lamb downwards, our fanatics of the Jacobean drama have brought with them half the qualities they have attributed; they have seen too much on the one hand, and too little on the other. These powerful and romantic poets are no longer in need of being urged upon ignorant or unwilling admirers. They are rather in danger of suffering from excess of praise and from a neglect of those errors of proportion and discretion which prevent them from claiming a place in the very highest rank of literary accomplishment. In a brief survey of non-Shakespearean drama from 1600 onwards, we ought not to blind ourselves to the fact that the highest point had already been reached, and that a decline was imminent.

#### *Ben Jonson*

With the turn of the century a reaction against pure imagination began to make itself felt in England, and this movement found a perfect expositor in BEN JONSON. Born seven years later than Shakespeare, he worked, like his fellows, in Henslowe's manufactory of romantic drama, until, in consequence of running a rapier through a man, the fierce poetic bricklayer was forced to take up for a while the position of an Ishmael. The immediate result was the production of a comedy, *Every Man in his Humour*, in which a new thing was started in drama, the study of what Jonson called "recent humours or manners of men that went along with the times." In other words, in the midst of that luxurious romanticism which had culminated in Shakespeare, Ben Jonson set out to be what we now call a "realist" or a "naturalist." In doing this, he went back as rigidly as he could to the methods of Plautus, and fixed his "grave and consecrated eyes" on an academic scheme by which poetry was no longer to be a mere entertainment but a form of lofty mental gymnastic. Jonson called his solid and truculent pictures of the age "comic satires," and his intellectual arrogance combining with his contempt for those who differed from him, soon called down upon his proud and rugged head all the hostility of Parnassus. About the year 1600 Jonson's pugnaciousness had roused against him an opposition in which, perhaps, Shakespeare alone forbore to take a part. But Jonson was a formidable antagonist, and when he fought with a brother poet, he had a trick, in a double sense, of taking his pistol from him and beating him too.

A persistent rumour, constantly refuted, will have it that Shakespeare was one of those whom Jonson hated. The most outspoken of misanthropes did



Title-page of the Collected Works of Ben Jonson, 1616

not, we may be sure, call another man “star of poets” and “soul of the age” without meaning what he said; but there may have been a sense in which,



while loving Shakespeare and admiring his work, Jonson disapproved of its tendency. It could hardly be otherwise. He delighted in an iron style, hammered and twisted; he must have thought that Shakespeare's "excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions" had a flow too liquid and facile. Jonson, with his Latin paraphrases, his stiff academic procession of ideas, could but dislike the flights and frenzies of his far less learned but brisker and airier companion. And Jonson, be it remembered, had the age on his side. To see *Julius Cæsar* on the boards might be more amusing, but surely no seriously minded Jacobean could admit that it was so instructive as a performance of *Sejanus* or of *Catiline*, which gave a chapter of good sound Roman history, without lyric flowers or ornaments of style, in hard blank verse. Even the ponderous comedies of Ben Jonson were put forth by him, and were accepted by his contemporaries, as very serious contributions to the highest culture. What other men called "plays" were "works" to Jonson, as the old joke had it.

Solid and of lasting value as are the productions of Jonson, the decline begins to be observed in them. Even if we confine our attention to his two noblest plays—the *Fox* and the *Alchemist*—we cannot but admit that here, in the very heyday and glory of the English Renaissance, a fatal element is introduced. Charm, ecstasy, the free play of the emotions, the development of individual character—these are no longer the sole solicitude of the poet, who begins to dogmatise and educate, to prefer types to persons and logic to passion. It is no wonder that Ben Jonson was so great a favourite with the writers of the Restoration, for he was their natural parent. With all their rules and unities, with all their stickling for pseud-Aristotelian correctness, they were the intellectual descendants of that poet who, as Dryden said, "was willing to give place to the classics in all things." For the next fifty years English poetry was divided between loyalty to Spenser and attraction to Ben Jonson, and every year the influence of the former dwindled while that of the latter increased.

In temperament Jonson differed wholly from the other leaders of Jacobean drama. They, without exception, were romantic; he by native bias, purely classical. It is not difficult to perceive that the essential quality of his mind had far more in common with Corneille and with Dryden than with Shakespeare. He was so full of intelligence that he was able to adopt, and to cultivate with some degree of zest, the outward forms of romanticism, but his heart was always with the Latins, and his favourite works, though not indeed his best, were his stiff and solid Roman tragedies. He brought labour to the construction of his poetry, and he found himself surrounded by facile pens, to whom he seemed, or fancied that he seemed, "barren, dull, lean, a poor writer." He did not admire much of the florid ornament in which they delighted, and which we also have been taught to admire. He grew to hate the kind of drama which Marlowe had inaugurated. No doubt, sitting in the Apollo room of the Old Devil Tavern, with his faithful Cartwright, Brome and Randolph round him, he would truculently point to the inscription above the chimney,

*Inspida pœmata nulla recitantor*, and not spare the masters of the lovely age which he had outlived. He would speak "to the capacity of his hearers," as he tells us that the true artificer should do, and they would encourage him, doubtless, to tell of doctrines and precepts, of the dignity of the ancients, of Aristotle, "first accurate critic and truest judge" of poetry. They would listen, nor be aware that, for all his wisdom, and all the lofty distinction of his intellect, the palmy hour of English drama—that hour in which it had sung out like a child, ignorant of rules and precepts—had passed for ever.

Not the less does Ben Jonson hold a splendid and durable place in our annals. His is the most vivid and picturesque personal figure of the times; he is the most learned scholar, the most rigorous upholder of the dignity of letters, the most blustering soldier and insulting dueller in the literary arena; while his personal characteristics, "the mountain belly and the rocky face," the capacity for drawing young persons of talent around him and captivating them there, the volcanic alternations of fiery wit and smouldering, sullen arrogance, appeal irresistibly to the imagination, and make the "arch-poet" live in history. But his works, greatly admired, are little read. They fail to hold any but a trained attention; their sober majesty and massive concentration are highly praiseworthy, but not in a charming direction. His indifference to beauty tells against him.

Jonson, even in his farces, is ponderous, and if we acknowledge "the flat sanity and smoke-dried sobriety" of his best passages, what words can we find for the tedium of his worst? He was an intellectual athlete of almost unequalled vigour, who chose to dedicate the essentially prosaic forces of his mind to the art of poetry, because the age he lived in was pre-eminently a poetic one. With such a brain and such a will as his he could not but succeed. If he had stuck to bricklaying, he must have rivalled Inigo Jones. But the most skilful and headstrong master-builder cannot quite become an architect of genius.

Of the parentage of **Benjamin Jonson** (1573–1637) nothing is known but what

## EVERY MAN IN his Humor.

As it hath beene sundry times  
*publickly acted by the right*  
Honorable the Lord Cham-  
berlaine his servants.

---

Written by BEN. JONSON.

---

*Quod non dant proceres, dabis Histris.*

*Hand s'amen inuidias vati, quem pulpita pascunt.*

---

Imprinted at London for *Walker Burre*, and are to  
be sold at his shoppe in *Pauls Church-yard*.  
1601.

Title-page of Ben Jonson's "Every Man in  
his Humour," 1601

he told Drummond, of Hawthornden. "His grandfather came from Carlisle, and, he thought, from Annandale to it; he served King Henry VIII., and was a gentleman. His father lost all his estates under Queen Mary, having been cast in prison and forfeited; at last turned minister: so he was a minister's son. He himself was posthumous born, a month after his father's decease," in 1573. Two years later his mother, who lived in London, married a master-bricklayer, who sent the child to a private school at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and then to Westminster. Here the great William Camden "learned him" not only to read Latin and Greek but to write with freedom in prose and verse. Ben Jonson speaks of no one with greater respect than of

Camden! most reverend head, to whom I owe  
All that I am in arts, all that I know.



Lucy Harrington, Countess of Bedford

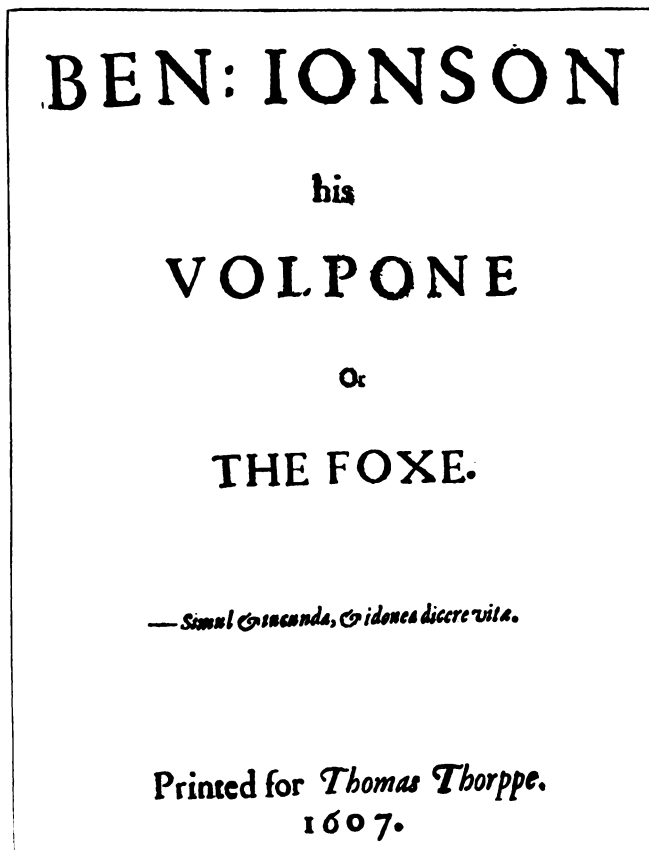
*After the portrait by Honthorst*

If Fuller is correct, Jonson went for a short time to St John's College, Cambridge, but he was certainly soon apprenticed to the bricklayer's trade. From this he escaped to enlist as a soldier in the Low Countries, where he had a duel with an enemy "in the face of both the camps," killing him, and "taking *spolia opima* from him." He returned to England about 1592, and married; he was not very happy in his wife, whom he described as "a shrew, but honest," nor in his children. We do not know how he was occupied until about 1597, when he is found writing for the stage, and producing the earliest of his surviving works, the comedy of *Every Man in*

*His Humour* (printed in 1601), unless, indeed, what is now called *The Case is Altered* be earlier still. In the autumn of 1598, one of the actors with whom Jonson was working in Henslowe's company was killed by him in a duel in the Fields at Shoreditch, and the poet was tried at the Old Bailey for murder. He confessed and was convicted, and came "almost to the gallows," but was released with the forfeit of all his goods and a felon's brand upon his thumb. While he was in prison for this affair, Jonson was converted to the Roman faith, in which he continued until 1610. According to an early legend, it was on his release that Shakespeare induced the Lord Chamberlain's men to buy *Every Man in His Humour*, which was certainly performed before the close of 1598; Shakespeare acted in it at the Globe. This was followed by what Ben Jonson called those "comical satires"—*Every Man out of His Humour* (1599), *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), and *The Poetaster* (1601), in which he justifies that reputation for "self-love, arrogancy, impudence,

railing" which was already beginning to attend him. Among those whom he principally attacked were Dekker and Marston, who was satirised in the *Poetaster*. These poets replied in *Satiromastix*. Ben Jonson was now living under the patronage of Lord Aubigny; in 1603 he joined the King's Company, and wrote for them the first of his Roman tragedies, *Sejanus*, which was put upon the stage, with Shakespeare in the cast. The accession of James I. seems to have been highly favourable to Ben Jonson's prosperity. The earliest of his entertainments, *The Satyr*, was given at Althorpe, and he seems to have been immediately afterwards appointed Court Poet. Amid his innumerable masques, panegyrics, and Twelfth-Night pieces, he found time for work of a solid and durable kind. His magnificent *Volpone*; or, *the Fox*, was given at the Globe Theatre in 1605; this was a notable year in Ben Jonson's life, for it not only saw the earliest of his great Court-masques, *Blackness*, produced at Whitehall in conjunction with Inigo Jones's architecture, but, with Chapman and his old insulted enemy, Marston. At the close of 1604 Jonson had written the comedy of *Eastward Ho!* which contained

"something against the Scots," for which the poets were thrown into prison. Ben Jonson's account of what followed this, given to Drummond, is amusing: "The report was that we should then have had our ears cut and noses. After our delivery. I banqueted with my friends; there was Camden, Selden, and others; at the midst of the feast my old mother drank to me, and showed me a paper she had (if the sentence had taken execution) to have mixed in the prison among my drink, which was full of lusty strong poison, and that she was no churl, she told, she intended first to have drunk of it herself." It may be that after this event Jonson withdrew, under Lord Aubigny's protection, to the country for awhile, since we hear little of him for some few years. He returned, however, to write



Title-page of Ben Jonson's "Volpone," 1607

plays for the Children of the Revels, and he was now in great force. *The Silent Woman*, acted in 1609, *The Alchemist* in 1610, and *Catiline* in 1611, display the powers of Ben Jonson at their most characteristic altitudes. Nor, in its own way, is lower praise deserved by the rich London comedy of *Bartholomew Fair*, produced in 1614. Before this date Jonson had been sent to Paris by Sir Walter Raleigh, as tutor to his young son, a responsible situation for which the poet, by his own confession, was ill-fitted. After his return to London, Jonson collected his works in one folio volume in 1616, and in the same year produced his comedy, *The Devil is an Ass*. This showed a strange decline in power, and Ben Jonson may have been conscious of this, for he wrote no more plays for nine years. He turned



Inigo Jones

From a copy of the portrait by Van Dyck

his attention to other branches of work, and particularly to the composition of masques. In the summer of 1618 he walked from London to Scotland, in spite of Bacon's dissuasion, who "said to him he loved not to see poesy go on other feet than poetical *dactylus* and *spondæus*." He met the poet Drummond in Edinburgh and was invited by him to stay at his house at Hawthornden. Drummond took invaluable notes of Jonson's conversation, the advantages of which he enjoyed until January 19, 1619; he also drew a somewhat caustic sketch of his burly guest himself: "He is a great lover and praiser of himself; a contemner and scorner of others; given rather to lose a friend than a jest; . . . he is passionately kind and angry; careless either to gain or keep; vindictive, but, if he be well answered, at himself . . . ; oppressed with fantasy, which hath

ever mastered his reason." Jonson intended to write a fishing pastoral about Loch Lomond, and a description of his "foot-pilgrimage." The latter was certainly written, but it perished in the fire which soon after destroyed Jonson's valuable library. In 1623 he wrote the famous poem to the memory of "my beloved Master William Shakespeare," which appeared in the First Folio. In 1625 he reappeared on the public stage with the comedy of *The Staple of News*. This was followed by *The New Inn*, in 1629; *The Magnetic Lady*, in 1632; and *A Tale of a Tub*, in 1633. These are the plays of Ben Jonson's decline, harshly but justly described by Dryden as his "dotages." The obvious decline of power in these works (although there is beautiful poetry in *The New Inn*) was doubtless connected with the poet's physical condition, for in the early months of 1626 he had been attacked by paralysis. He laboured under many infirmities, and particularly under an unwieldy shape. He described himself to Lady Covell as—

a tardy, cold,  
Unprofitable chattel, fat and old,



Laden with belly, who doth hardly approach  
His friends but to break chairs or crack a couch,  
Whose weight is twenty stone within two pound.

In 1628 he accepted the sinecure of chronologer to the City of London, but he produced nothing, and in 1631 "the barbarous court of aldermen withdrew their chandlerly pension for verjuice and mustard." He quarrelled with Inigo Jones, and lost his place at Court as masquemaker. He sank into great poverty, but the kindness of the King gave some comfort to his latest years. Ben Jonson died on August 6, 1637, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, under a plain slab, on which the words, "O rare Ben Jonson!" were afterwards carved. His charming fragment of a pastoral, *The Sad Shepherd*, was posthumously published in 1641. The decease of Jonson was treated almost as a national event, and he was mourned by all the poets of the age.

From "THE ALCHEMIST."

*Mam.* We will be brave, Puffe,  
now we have the medicine  
My meat shall all come in in  
Indian shells,  
Dishes of agate set in gold, and  
studded  
With emeralds, sapphires, hyacinths, and rubies;  
The tongues of carps, dormice,  
and camels' heels,  
Boil'd in the spirit of Sol, and  
dissolved pearl,  
(Apicius' diet 'gainst the epilepsy,  
And I will eat these broths with  
spoons of amber,  
Headed with diamant and carbuncle.



Ben Jonson's Tomb in Westminster Abbey

My footboy shall eat pheasants, calver'd salmons,  
Knots, godwits, lampreys: I myself will have  
The beards of barbels served, instead of salads;  
Oil'd mushrooms; and the swelling unctuous paps  
Of a fat pregnant sow, newly cut off,  
Dress'd with an exquisite and poignant sauce;  
For which, I 'll say unto my cook, "There 's gold;  
Go forth, and be a knight."

*Face.* Sir, I 'll go look  
A little, how it heightens.

*Mam.* Do.—My shirts  
I 'll have of tassata-sarsnet, soft and light  
As cobwebs ; and, for all my other raiment,  
It shall be such as might provoke the Persian,  
Were he to teach the world riot anew.  
My gloves of fishes' and birds' skins, perfumed  
With gums of paradise, and eastern air.

*Sur.* And do you think to have the stone with this ?

*Mam.* No, I do think to have all this with the stone.



Figures designed by Inigo Jones for a Masque

*Sur.* Why, I have heard, he must be *homo frugi*,  
A pious, holy, and religious man,  
One free from mortal sin, a very virgin——

*Mam.* That makes it——Sir, he is so. But I buy it,  
My venture brings it me. He, honest wretch,  
A notable, superstitious, good soul,  
Has worn his knees bare, and his slippers bald,  
With prayer and fasting for it ; and, sir, let him  
Do it alone, for me, still. Here he comes.  
Not a profane word, afore him : 'tis poison

## BEN JONSON

*From "THE SAD SHEPHERD."*

*Alken.* Know ye the witch's dell ?  
*Scarlet.* No more than I do know the walks of hell.

*Alk.* Within a gloomy dimble she doth dwell  
 Down in a pit o'ergrown with brakes and briars,  
 Close by the ruins of a shaken abbey,  
 Torn with an earthquake down unto the ground,  
 'Mongst graves and grotts, near an old charnel-house,  
 Where you shall find her sitting in her form,  
 As fearful, and melancholic, as that  
 She is about ; with caterpillars' kells,  
 And knotty cobwebs, rounded in with spells.  
 Then she steals forth to relief, in the fogs,  
 And rotten mists, upon the fens and bogs,  
 Down to the drowned lands of Lincolnshire ;  
 To make ewes cast their lambs, swine eat their farrow ;  
 The housewife's tun not work, nor the milk churn ;  
 Writhe children's wrists, and suck their breath in sleep ;  
 Get vials of their blood ; and where the sea  
 Casts up his slimy ooze, search for a weed  
 To open locks with, and to rivet charms,  
 Planted about her, in the wicked seat  
 Of all her mischiefs, which are manifold.

*John.* I wonder such a story could be told  
 Of her dire deeds.

*Geo.* I thought, a witch's banks  
 Had enclosed nothing but the merry pranks  
 Of some old woman.

*Scar.* Yes, her malice more.

*Scath.* As it would quickly appear, had we the store  
 Of his collects.

*Geo.* Ay, this good learned man  
 Can speak her right.

*Scar.* He knows her shifts and haunts.  
*Alk.* And all her wiles and turns. The venom'd plants  
 Wherewith she kills ; where the sad mandrake grows,  
 Whose groans are deathful ; the dead numbing nightshade ;  
 The stupefying hemlock ; adder's tongue,  
 And martagan ; the shrieks of luckless owls,  
 We hear, and croaking night-crows in the air ;  
 Green-bellied snakes ; blue fire-drakes in the sky ;  
 And giddy flitter-mice with leather wings ;  
 The scaly beetles, with their habergeons  
 That make a humming murmur as they fly ;  
 There, in the stocks of trees, white fays do dwell,  
 And span-long elves that dance about a pool,  
 With each a little changeling in their arms :  
 The airy spirits play with falling stars.  
 And mount the sphere of fire, to kiss the moon ;  
 While she sits reading by the glow-worm's light,  
 Or rotten wood, o'er which the worm hath crept,  
 The baneful schedule of her nocent charms,  
 And binding characters, through which she wounds  
 Her puppets, the *sigilla* of her witchcraft.  
 All this I know, and I will find her for you ;  
 And show you her sitting in her form ; I'll lay  
 My hand upon her ; make her throw her scut

# HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

## THE EPISTLE.

Humanity, is not the least honor of My Worth. For, if once the worthy Professors of these learnings shall come (as heretofore they were) to do the care of Princes, the Crowns My Soueraignes weare will not more adorne My Temples; nor they flames live longer in My Medals, than in such Subjects labors My Poetry, my Lord, is not borne w<sup>th</sup> every man; nor every day: And in her general right, it is now my minde to thank My Highness, who not only do honor her self & save, but are curious to ex- mine her. Wh<sup>ch</sup> ye see, I inquire into for beauties, and strength. Where, though it hath provid a word of some difficulty to mee to observe the particular authorities (according to My gracious command, and desire some out of indignation) to those things, w<sup>ch</sup> I will obt of My Highness and memory of my former readings; yet, now I have overcome it, the reward that motives mee is double to one self: Wh<sup>ch</sup> is, that thereby, My excellence understanding will not only in- fise mee to My owne knowledge, but decline the stiffness of others original Ignorance, already, to censure. For w<sup>ch</sup> singular bounty, if my Fate (most excellent Prince, and only Delicacy of mankind) shall restore mee to the Age of My actions, whether in the Camp, or the Council-Chamber, I may write, at nights, the doods of My days; I will then labor to bring forth some worke as wor- thy of My fame, as my Ambition therein is of My.

By the most true admirer of My Highness Vertues,  
And most lowly Celebrator of them.

Ben: Jonson.

At The

A page from Ben Jonson's "Masque of Queens." The Epistle with his Signature  
British Museum, Showcase IX.





BEN JONSON .  
AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY GERARD HONTHORST



Along her back, when she doth start before us.  
 But you must give her law ; and you shall see her  
 Make twenty leaps and doubles, cross the paths,  
 And then squat down beside us.

*John.* Crafty crone,

I long to be at the sport, and to report it.

*Scar.* We'll make this hunting of the witch as famous  
 As any other blast of venery.

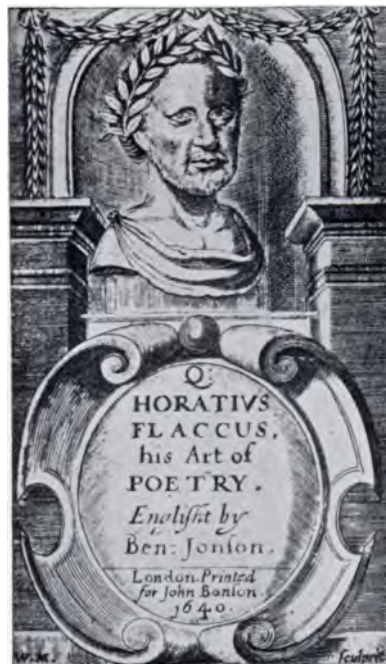
*Geo.* If we could come to see her, cry *so ho* once——

*Alk.* That I do promise, or I'm no good hag-finder.

The Masque, a form of entertainment in which music, architecture, and dancing were combined with lyrical poetry, was highly popular in the reign of James I., and in the preparation of these pageants Jonson excelled all his contemporaries, although Campion and Daniel were also skilful. In these elaborate and fanciful pieces we often find delicate snatches of song, as this from *The Masque of Beauty* (1609) :

So Beauty on the waters stood,  
 When Love had severed earth from flood !  
 So when he parted air from fire  
 He did with concord all inspire !  
 And then a motive he them taught,  
 That elder than himself was thought ;  
 Which thought was, yet, the child of earth,  
 For Love is older than his birth.

There is no trace of the strict Jonsonian buskin in FRANCIS BEAUMONT and JOHN FLETCHER ; as even contemporary critics perceived, they simply continued the pure romanticism of Shakespeare, and they seemed to carry it further and higher. We no longer think their noon brighter than his "dawning hours," but we admit that in a certain sense the great Twin Brethren proceeded beyond him in their warm, loosely-girdled plays. They exaggerated all the dangerous elements which he had held restrained ; they proceeded, in fact, downwards, towards the inevitable decadence, gay with all the dolphin colours of approaching death. It is difficult to assign to either writer his share in the huge and florid edifice which bears their joint names. Their own age attributed to Fletcher the "keen treble" and to Beaumont the "deep bass"—comedy, that is, and tragedy respectively. Modern investigation has found less and less in their work which can be definitely ascribed to Beaumont, who, indeed, died so early as 1616. It is generally believed that the partnership lasted no longer than from 1608 to 1611, and that the writing of only some dozen out of the entire fifty-five plays was involved in it. Were it not that the very noblest are among these few, which include the *Maid's Tragedy* and *Philaster, A King and no King* and the *Knight*



*Beaumont and Fletcher*

Frontispiece to Ben Jonson's "Horace"

of the *Burning Pestle*, we might almost disregard the shadowy name of Beaumont, and treat this whole mass of dramatic literature as belonging to Fletcher, who went on writing alone, or with Massinger, until shortly before his death in 1625. The chronological sequence of these dramas, only about ten of which were printed during Fletcher's lifetime, remains the theme of bold and contradictory conjecture.

We have to observe in these glowing and redundant plays a body of lyrico-



Francis Beaumont

After an engraving by Philip Audinet

dramatic literature, proceeding directly from and parallel to the models instituted by Shakespeare, and continued for nearly ten years after his death. Nothing else in English is so like Shakespeare as a successful scene from a romantic comedy of Fletcher. Superficially, the language, the verse, the mental attitude often seem absolutely identical, and it is a singular tribute to the genius of the younger poet that he can endure the parallel for a moment. It is only for a moment; if we take Fletcher at his very best—in the ardent and melodious scenes of the *False One*, for instance, where, amid an array of the familiar Roman names, we find him desperately and directly challenging comparison with *Antony and Cleopatra*—we have only to turn from the shadow back to the

substance to see how thin and unreal is this delicately-tinted, hectic, and phantasmal picture of passion by the side of Shakespeare's solid humanity. Jonson has lost the stage because his personages are not human beings, but types of character, built up from without, and vitalised by no specific or personal springs of action. Beaumont and Fletcher are equally dead from the theatrical point of view, but from an opposite cause: their figures have not proved too hard and opaque for perennial interest, but too filmy and undulating; they possess not too much, but too little solidity. They are vague embodiments of instincts, faintly palpitating with desires and emulations and eccentricities, but not built up and set on firm feet by the practical genius of dramatic creation.

Yet no conception of English poetry is complete without a reference to these beautiful, sensuous, incoherent plays. The Alexandrine genius of Beaumont and Fletcher was steeped through and through in beauty; and so quickly did they follow the fresh morning of Elizabethan poetry that their premature sunset was tinged with dewy and "fresh-quilted" hues of dawn. In the short span of their labours they seem to take hold of the entire field of the drama, from birth to death, and Fletcher's quarter of a century helps us to see how rapid and direct was the decline. If the talent of Jonson had been more flexible, if the taste of Fletcher had not been radically so relaxed and luxurious, these two great writers should have carried English drama on after the death of Shakespeare—with less splendour, of course, yet with its character unimpaired. Unfortunately, neither of these excellent men, though all compact with talent, had the peculiar gift opportune to the moment's need, and ten years undid what it had taken ten years to create and ten more to sustain.

Comparatively little has been preserved about the lives of the "great Twin Brethren" of Jacobean drama. **Francis Beaumont** (1584–1616) was one of the sons of the judge of the same name, of Grace Dieu. He entered Pembroke College (Broadgates Hall) early in 1597, and three years later came up to London to study at the Inner Temple. Here he is supposed to have written the rich Ovidian paraphrase of *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus*, published anonymously in 1602. He early engaged the affections of Ben Jonson, who wrote:

How do I love thee, Beaumont, and thy Muse,  
That unto me dost such religion use.

His acquaintance with Fletcher dated from about 1606, from which time until 1611 we are to believe that the two friends constantly collaborated. Beaumont married in 1613, and probably retired to the country. He died in 1616, and was

## The Maids Tragedie.

AS IT HATH BEENE

diuers times Acted at the *Black-Friers* by  
the Kings Maiesties Seruants.

Newly perused, augmented, and enlarged, This second Impression.



LONDON,

Printed for *Francis Constable*, and are  
to be sold at the White Lion in  
*Pauls Church-yard*. 1612.

Title-page of Beaumont and Fletcher's  
"Maid's Tragedie," 1622



buried in Westminster Abbey. His poems were not collected until 1640, when they were carelessly put together with several pieces of dubious authenticity.

**John Fletcher** (1579-1625) was born at Rye, while his father, the future bishop, was the incumbent of that parish. In 1583 the Fletchers removed to Peterborough, and in 1589 to Bristol. The poet was sent in 1591 to Bene't College (Corpus), Cambridge, of which his father had been president: he became "bible-clerk" there in 1593. At this point we lose all sight of him until, about 1606, we find him engaged with Beaumont in the writing of plays. Aubrey has left an



**John Fletcher**

*After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery*

account of their subsequent mode of life: "They lived together, on the Bankside, not far from the playhouse, both bachelors, the same clothes, cloak, &c., between them." Fuller says that on one occasion they were threatened with arrest for high treason, because, while they arranged one of their plots together, one of them shouted out, "I'll kill the King!" They met other poets and actors of the day at the Mermaid Tavern, and Beaumont in a burst of autobiography as rare as it is welcome says:

What things have we  
seen

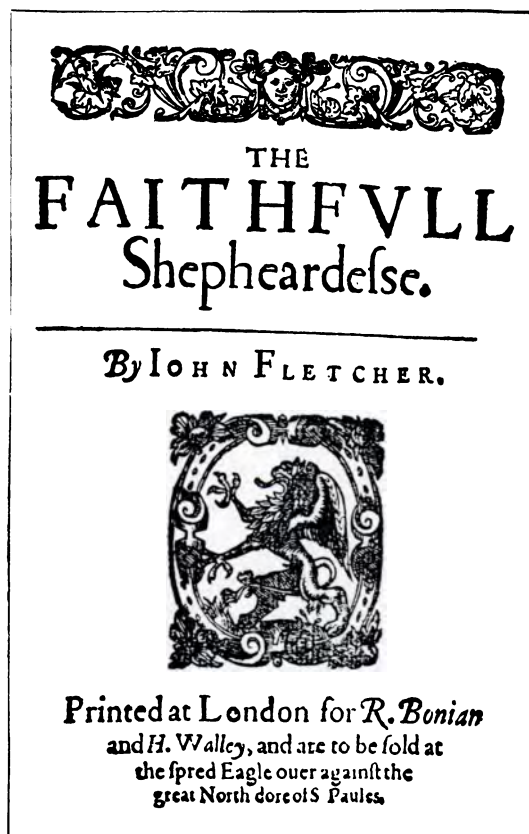
Done at the Mermaid! heard  
words that have been  
So nimble and so full of subtle  
flame,  
As if that every one from  
whom they came  
Had meant to put his whole  
wit in a jest,  
And had resolved to live a  
fool the rest

Of his dull life; then, when there hath been thrown  
Wit able enough to justify the town  
For three days past—wit that might warrant be  
For the whole city to talk foolishly,  
Till that were cancelled; and, when that was gone,  
We left an air behind us, which alone  
Was able to make the two next companies  
Right witty.

Fletcher outlived Beaumont by nine years, and died of the plague in London; he was buried in St. Saviour's, Southwark, on August 29, 1625. A great deal of vain investigation has been expended on the dates, authorship, and distribution of the plays attributed to Beaumont and Fletcher. What is actually known is

considerable, and may be thus summarised. Fifty-five plays are extant which are more or less definitely connected with the name of Fletcher and of some collaborator. Of these, *The Woman-Hater* was printed as early as 1607, and *The Faithfull Shepherdesse* about 1610. Then, during the lifetime of Beaumont, were printed three pieces which are admitted to be the joint work of that poet and of Fletcher—these are, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1613), *Cupid's Revenge* (1615), and *The Scornful Lady*. After Beaumont's death, but during the life of Fletcher, four more quartos were published, all by the joint authors—*A King No King* (1619), *The Maid's Tragedy*, *Philaster* (1620), and *Thierry and Theodoret*. After the death of Fletcher, a play was now and then issued, until in 1647 was published the first folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Works*, in which thirty-five new plays were included, but none of those already issued reprinted. These latter, with some others, were included in the second folio of 1679. The general opinion of critics attributes about twenty-seven of the plays to Fletcher alone, who was, quite certainly, the predominant partner; about fourteen to Beaumont and Fletcher in concert; two, *Henry VIII.* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*, to Fletcher and Shakespeare; four or five to Fletcher and Massinger; and the rest to Fletcher in collaboration with Rowley or Shirley or Field or Middleton. A tragi-comedy of *Cardenio*, attributed to Fletcher and Shakespeare, existed in MS. until the middle of the eighteenth century, when Warburton's cook lighted her kitchen-fire with it. The student should be warned that nowhere in the history of English literature has bibliography tended to run more joyously to riot than in the attribution of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays. Even about the following lovely song, which has been said to be certainly Fletcher's, and yet evidently Shakespeare's, to dogmatise is impossible:

Roses, their sharp spines being gone,  
Not royal in their smells alone,  
But in their hue;  
Maiden-pinks, of odour faint,  
Daisies smell-less, yet most quaint,  
And sweet thyme true;



Title-page of "The Faithfull Shepherdesse"

Primrose, eldest child of Ver,  
 Merry spring-time's harbinger,  
     With her bells dim ;  
 Oxlips in their cradles growing,  
 Marigolds on death-beds blowing,  
     Larks' heels trim.



John Fletcher

*Engraved portrait in the second edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's Plays*

All, dear Nature's children  
 sweet,  
 Lie 'fore bride and bride-  
 groom's feet,

Blessing their sense !  
 Not an angel of the air,  
 Bird melodious or bird fair,  
     Be absent hence !

The crow, the slanderous  
 cuckoo, nor  
 The boding raven, or  
 chough hoar,  
     Nor chatting pie,  
 May on our bride-house  
 perch or sing,  
 Or with them any discord  
 bring,  
     But from it fly !

From "PHILASTER"

(How the boy Bellario was  
 found)

I have a boy  
 Sent by the gods, I hope  
 to this intent,  
 Not yet seen in the court ;  
 hunting the buck,  
 I found him sitting by a  
 fountain side,  
 Of which he borrow'd some  
 to quench his thirst,  
 And paid the nymph again  
 as much in tears ;  
 A garland lay him by,  
 made by himself,  
 Of many several flowers,  
 bred in the bay,  
 Stuck in that mystic order,  
 that the rareness  
 Delighted me : but ever  
 when he turn'd  
 His tender eyes upon 'em,  
 he would weep,  
 As if he meant to make  
 'em grow again.  
 Seeing such pretty helpless  
 innocence

Dwell in his face, I ask'd him all his story ;  
 He told me that his parents gentle died,  
 Leaving him to the mercy of the fields,  
 Which gave him roots ; and of the crystal springs,

Which did not stop their courses ; and the sun,  
 Which still, he thank'd him, yielded him his light.  
 Then took he up his garland, and did show  
 What every flower, as country people hold,  
 Did signify ; and how all order'd thus,  
 Express'd his grief : and to my thoughts did read  
 The prettiest lecture of his country art  
 That could be wish'd, so that, methought, I could  
 Have studied it. I gladly entertain'd him,  
 Who was as glad to follow, and have got  
 The trustiest, loving'st, and the gentlest boy,  
 That ever master kept ; him will I send  
 To wait on you, and bear our hidden love.

*From "WIT WITHOUT MONEY"*

*(The Humours of a Prodigal Nephew)*

*Lovegood.* But say these means were honest, will they last, sir ?

*Valentine.* Far longer than your jerkin, and wear fairer. . . .

Your mind's enclosed, nothing lies open nobly ;  
 Your very thoughts are hinds, that work on nothing  
 But daily sweat and trouble : were my way  
 So full of dirt as this ('tis true) I'd shift it.  
 Are my acquaintance graziers ? But, sir, know ;  
 No man that I'm allied to in my living,  
 But makes it equal whether his own use  
 Or my necessity pull first ; nor is this forced,  
 But the mere quality and poisure of goodness,  
 And do you think I venture nothing equal ?

*Lovegood.* You pose me, cousin.

*Valentine.* What's my knowledge, uncle ? Is't not worth money ?

What's my understanding ? my travel ? reading ? wit ?  
 All these digested ? my daily making men,  
 Some to speak, that too much phlegm had frozen up ;  
 Some other that spoke too much, to hold their peace,  
 And put their tongues to pensions : some to wear their clothes,  
 And some to keep them : these are nothing, uncle ?  
 Besides these ways, to teach the way of nature,  
 A manly love, community to all  
 That are deservers, not examining  
 How much or what's done for them : it is wicked. . . .  
 Are not these ways as honest, as persecuting  
 The starved inheritance with musty corn  
 The very rats were fain to run away from ?  
 Or selling rotten wood by the pound, like spices,  
 Which gentlemen do after burn by the ounces ?  
 Do not I know your way of feeding beasts  
 With grains, and windy stuff, to blow up butchers ?  
 Your racking pastures, that have eaten up,  
 As many singing shepherds, and their issues,  
 As Andalusia breeds ? These are authentic.  
 I tell you, sir, I would not change ways with you ;  
 Unless it were, to sell your state that hour,  
 And (if 'twere possible) to spend it then too ;  
 For all your beans in Rumnillo : now you know me.

The ponderous GEORGE CHAPMAN has a triple claim upon the attention of the student ; he was an ambitious philosophical or gnomic poet, he was the *George Chapman*



author of that valuable translation of Homer which has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, and he was the author, apparently in later middle life, of a cluster of bombastic historical tragedies and loosely articulated romantic comedies which have been admired to excess by thoroughgoing fanatics of the Jacobean drama, but in which, to a common observer, the faults seem vastly to outweigh the rare and partial merits. It is exceedingly difficult in a few words to offer any intelligible judgment on the works of Chapman. His was an austere and an impassioned devotion to the art of poetry. He loved what one of his contemporaries called the "full and heightened style," and his aim in it was dignified; but even Mr. Swinburne, who has an extreme partiality for Chapman, and has dedicated an entire volume to the analysis



George Chapman

*From the portrait by W. Pass in "The Crowne of all Homer's Workes," 1624*

of his writings, has to admit that "the height indeed is somewhat giddy, and the fulness too often tends or threatens to dilate into tumidity." His prose plays, which are the most readable of Chapman's works, are not satisfactory pieces of stagecraft, and his haughty suspicion of the whole sex of woman is as absurd as it is ungraceful. No one shines so much in quotation, or is seen to so partial an advantage in purple passages as the diffuse, pedantic and convulsive Chapman.

It is supposed that **George Chapman** (d. 1634) was born so early as 1559, and in the neighbourhood of Hitchin. We know little or nothing about his early career, but at the age of about thirty-five he appears in London, actively engaged in literary labour. His earliest production, *The Shadow of Night* (1594), is of an astounding obscurity; it was followed in 1595 by another "fat and foggy" poem,



*Ovid's Banquet of Sense*, in which, however, some splendid phrases, such as, "the downward-burning flame of her rich hair," and

as still as Vesper's hair  
When not an aspen-leaf is stirred in air,

gave promise of better things. Chapman's earliest known play is *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1598); in the same year, greatly daring, he completed Marlowe's poem of *Hero and Leander*. It is supposed that he was most active as a playwright between 1606 and 1612, during which time he produced *Bussy d'Ambois* and *The Conspiracy of Byron* among tragedies, and *Monsieur d'Olive* and *May-day* among comedies. His magnificent versions of Homer occupied the press at intervals from 1598 to about 1624. The best of Chapman's poems is *The Tears of Peace* (1609), in which occurs the exquisite passage about the robin, the bird

that loves humans best,  
That hath the bugle-eyes and rosy breast,  
And is the yellow Autumn's nightingale.

Wood tells us that Chapman was "a person of most reverend aspect, religious and temperate." The following soliloquy, from *Bussy d'Ambois* (1608), gives a very favourable impression of Chapman's ponderous and haughty rhetoric :

What dismal change is here ? The good  
old friar  
Is murdered, being made known to serve  
my love.  
Note what he wants ! He wants his utmost  
weed,  
He wants his life and body. Which of  
these  
Shall be the want he means, and may  
supply me  
With any fit forewarning ? This strange  
vision—  
Together with the dark prediction

Used by the Prince of Darkness that was raised  
By this embodied shadow—stirs my thoughts  
With reminition of the spirit's promise,  
Who told me, that, by any invocation  
I should have power to raise him. . . .  
Now then, I will claim  
Performance of his free and gentle vow  
To appear in greater light, and make more plain  
His rugged oracle. I long to know  
How my dear mistress fares, and be inform'd  
What hand she now holds on the troubled blood  
Of her incensed lord. Methought the spirit,  
When he had utter'd his perplex'd presage,  
Threw his changed countenance headlong into clouds

## MONSIEVR D'OLIVE.

A

*Comedie as it was sundrie times acted by her  
Majesties children at the Blacke-  
Friers.*

*By George Chapman.*



LONDON

Printed by T. C. for *Wilhelm Habner*, and are to be sold at  
his Shop in Saint Dunstons Church-yard in  
Fleet-street, 1606.

Title-page of George Chapman's  
"Monsieur D'Olive," 1606

His forehead bent, as it would hide his face :  
 He knock'd his chin against his darken'd breast,  
 And struck a churlish silence through his powers.—  
 Terror of Darkness : O thou king of Flames,  
 That with thy music-footed horse dost strike  
 The clear light out of crystal, on dark earth,  
 And hurl'st instructive fire about the world ;  
 Wake, wake the drowsy and enchanted night,  
 That sleeps with dead eyes in this heavy riddle.  
 Or thou, great Prince of Shades, where never sun  
 Sticks his far-darted beams ; whose eyes are made  
 To see in darkness, and see ever best

Where sense is blindest ; open now  
 the heart

Of thy abashed oracle, that, for fear  
 Of some ill it includes, would fain  
 lie hid ;

And rise thou with it in thy greater  
 light.

Thomas  
 Dekker



Chapman's Tomb in St. Giles' Church

Older than all the other playwrights who will be treated in this chapter, except Chapman, THOMAS DEKKER preserved something of the simplicity of the earlier Elizabethan age. He wrote with great simplicity, and he had the art of transfiguring the little virtues of everyday existence, emphasising their homely values and clothing them with poetic fancy. There is something of the child about Dekker's turns of thought, so pretty, extravagant and touching. It was his desire to

write on paper  
 Made of those turning leaves of heaven, the clouds,  
 Or speak with angels' tongues,

and when he succeeds, it is with an air so delicate and so amusing that criticism has often been disarmed in his presence and has used language concerning him that the general tenor of his work cannot be held to deserve. His early comedies, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* and *Old Fortunatus*, are entertaining and often poetical, but extremely primitive in form, and practice never made Dekker perfect in the art of constructing a play. He rarely, in later years, trusted implicitly to his own skill, and in by far the most powerful works with which his name is connected, *The Honest Whore* and *The Virgin Martyr*, he was aided by better constructors of a play than himself ; nor can we tell how much of what we admire in the first case is due to Middleton,

and in the second to Massinger. In such a tirade as the following, taken from *Old Fortunatus*, we see that the versification and general poetical style of Dekker form an interesting link between the Predecessors and the Successors of Shakespeare :

*Fortunat.* O, whither am I rapt beyond myself ?

More violent conflicts fight in every thought  
Than his whose fatal choice Troy's downfall wrought.

Shall I contract myself to Wisdom's love ?  
Then I lose Riches ; and a wise man poor  
Is like a sacred book that's never read ;  
To himself he lives and to all else seems dead.  
This age thinks better of a gilded fool,  
Than of a threadbare saint in Wisdom's school.  
I will be strong : then I refuse long life ;  
And though mine arm should conquer twenty worlds,

There's a lean fellow beats all conquerors :  
The greatest strength expires with loss of breath,

The mightiest in one minute stoop to death.  
Then take long life, or health ; should I do so,

I might grow ugly, and that tedious scroll  
Of months and years much misery may enroll :  
Therefore I'll beg for beauty ; yet I will not :  
That fairest cheek hath oftentimes a soul  
Leprous as sin itself, than hell more foul.

The wisdom of this world is idiotism ;  
Strength a weak reed ; health sickness' enemy,  
And it at length will have the victory.  
Beauty is but a painting ; and long life  
Is a long journey in December gone,  
Tedious and full of tribulation.

Therefore, dread sacred empress, make me rich :  
My choice is store of gold ; the rich are wise :  
He that upon his back rich garments wears  
Is wise, though on his head grow Midas' ears.  
Gold is the strength, the sinews of the world,  
The health, the soul, the beauty most divine ;  
A mask of gold hides all deformities ;  
Gold is heaven's physic, life's restorative ;  
O, therefore make me rich !

The interesting prose of Dekker will be dealt with in the succeeding chapter.

Although the drama in England had turned away decisively from imitation of the Latin tragedies attributed to Seneca, which had so much influence on the European stage, yet in one particular our playwrights were encouraged by the traditions of the *Senecanum opus* to foster a taste for classic horrors. There was a thirst in the English playgoer for terrible pleasures, for wild gusts

For sale by Mr George Chapman for a Pastoral  
ending in a Tragedy in part of the play  
Anno 1599

232 ms George Chapman  
Facsimile Receipt for 40s. paid for - "Pastoral Ending in a Tragedy" from Chapman to Philip Henslowe  
British Museum, MSS. 30562

Melodrama

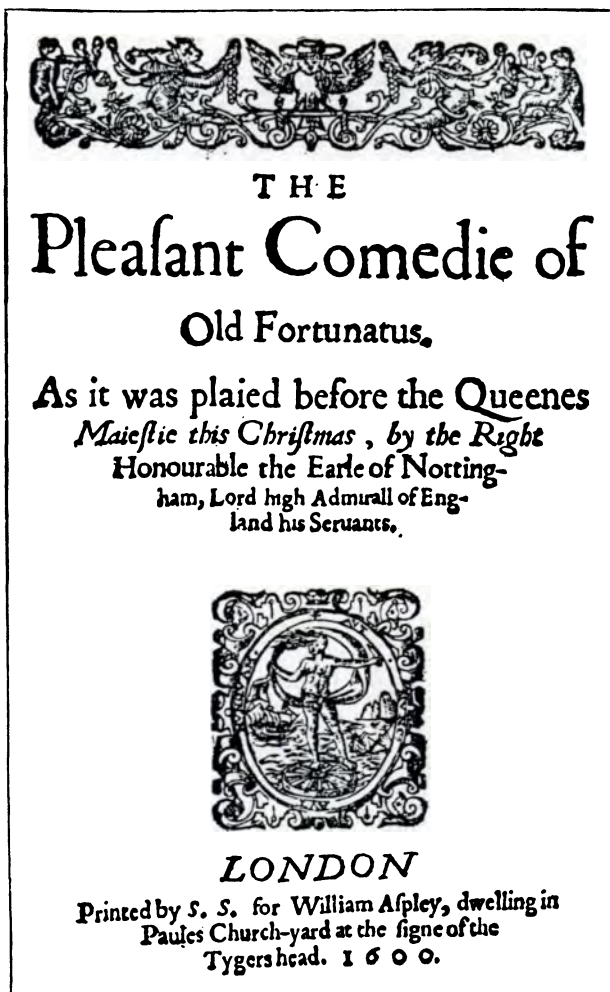
of emotional excitement, for appeals to the most primitive instincts of revenge and fear. These were generously indulged in the irregular drama of Elizabeth and James, without much consideration of what is called taste; they were indulged grossly and fiercely in plays the very conception of which was disfigured by the violence of crime. It is curious to see with what

a simplicity this was sometimes done. In the *Two Tragedies in One*, 1600, by Robert Yarrington, a play to which Charles Lamb was the first to call attention, the hero dismembers his victim on the stage in the presence of his sister, to whom he points out the armless and legless trunk, saying :

Hark, Rachael ! I will cross  
the water straight,  
And fling this middle men-  
tion of a man  
Into some ditch.

The crudity of this scene seems to exceed that in the *Hippolytus* of Seneca, where Theseus runs over the inventory of his son's fragments, "huc huc reliquias vehiti cari corporis," which has so often been quoted as the last expression of tragical insensibility.

The vehemence of exaggerated force, exhibited in a frenzied pursuit of what are called "strong situations," is a remarkable element in all the minor

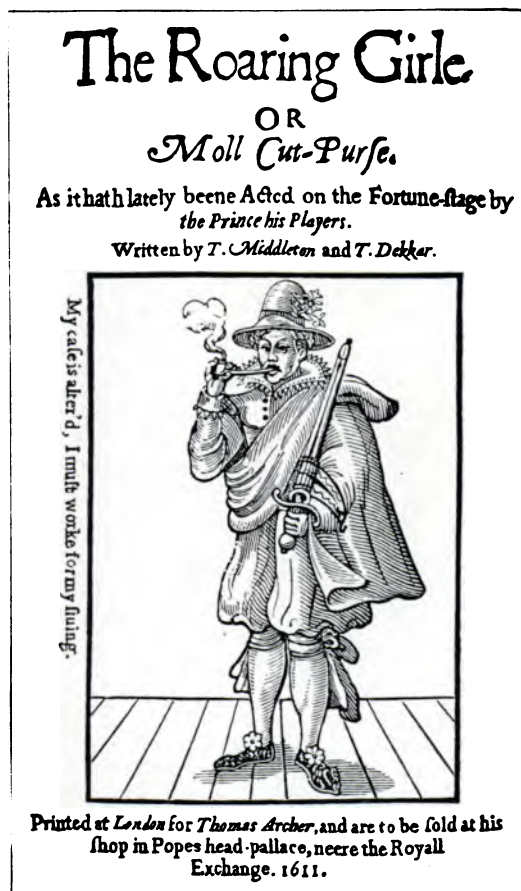


Title-page of Dekker's "Pleasant Comedie of Old Fortunatus," 1600

dramatic literature of this age. It is seen in the curious "domestic" tragedies, one of which has just been mentioned, in which familiar crimes of the day, interesting from the moral horror of their circumstances or the cruelty of their incidents, were rehearsed realistically before thrilled and terrified audiences. The dramatist loved to depict the rapid revolutions of the wheel of fortune, to show the assassins of to-day becoming the victims of to-morrow.

They took from contemporary history or legend themes in which they could plunge their audiences shuddering into the abysm of physical fear. Such tales as they loved to tell have become so rare in modern European chronicle that we were beginning to consider them impossible when the tragedy of Belgrade, in 1903, reminded us of the range of vindictive savagery. The nocturnal murder of Alexander and Draga was an episode, in all its sections, which seemed enacted in order that Tourneur or Chapman should arrange it in vehement blank verse. In the reign of Elizabeth and James a love of blood was kept alive by the frequent spectacle of sudden death. Of the audience of a London play-house the verse might have been recited with which the old Roman tragedy of *Octavia* had closed, "civis gaudet cruore." The more complete a massacre could be, the more hideous in its details, the more pitiless its motives, the readier a Jacobean audience was to welcome its presentment on the stage.

Three writers of distinction stand out pre-eminent among the numerous caterers for this peculiar love of the horrible. In each the instinct of the poet prevailed, during lucid intervals, over the cult of mere agitation and terror; yet all three, if examined not by the light of their occasional passages of illumination and beauty, but in the lurid twilight of their complete works, are seen to be, from the stage point of view, melodramatists of the blood-curdling type, little interested in the sane development of a plot or the determination of shades of character. They are distinguished from one another, not by any difference of aim in their attitude to the stage and the public, but by their poetical equipment. Of the three, by far the greatest is JOHN WEBSTER, greater in some respects than any other English tragic poet except Shakespeare. Webster required but a closer grasp of style and a happier architecture to rank among the leading English poets. *The Duchess of Malfy*, and, in its more rudimentar



Title-page of Dekker and Middleton's  
"Roaring Girl," 1611



form, the earlier *White Devil*, are plays which are distinguished by a marvelous intensity of passion. Webster has so splended a sense of the majesty of death, of the mutability of human pleasures, and of the velocity and weight of destiny, that he rises to conceptions which have an Æschylean dignity; but, unhappily, he grows weary of sustaining them, his ideas of stage-craft are rudimentary and spectacular, and his single well-constructed play, *Appius and Virginia*, has a certain disappointing tameness. Most of the Jacobean dramatists are now read only in extracts, and this test is highly favourable to Webster, who strikes us as a very noble poet driven by the exigencies of fashion to write for a stage, the business of which he had not studied and in which he took no great interest. JOHN MARSTON, whose

versification owes much to Marlowe, was a harsh and strident satirist, a screech-owl among the singing-birds; in the first decade of the seventeenth century he produced a series of vigorous rude tragedies and comedies which possess a character of their own, not sympathetic at all, but unique in its consistent note of caustic melancholy, and often brilliantly written. In CYRIL TOURNEUR the qualities of Marston and Webster are discovered driven to a grotesque excess. In the career of a soldier in the Netherlands fighting against the tyranny of Spain, he had in all probability inured his imagination to all spectacles of cruelty and outrage. He pours out what he remembers upon his dreadful page, and his two lurid tragedies surpass in extravagance of iniquity and profusion of ghastly innuendo all other compositions of their time. Cyril Tourneur is prince of those whose design is "to make our flesh creep," and occasionally he still succeeds.



**Moll Cutpurse**

From the "Roaring Girl"

*John Webster*

Of these three poets, probably born about the same time, little biography is preserved. **John Webster** (1575?–1625?) was the son of a London tailor, and was made free of the Merchant Taylors' Company in 1604. Of the dates of his early plays, written in collaboration with Marston, Dekker, and others, little is exactly preserved. His tragedy of *The White Devil*, founded on the adventures of Vittoria Corombona, was acted, perhaps, in 1608, but not printed until 1612. The historical play called *Appius and Virginia*, the comedy of *The Devil's Law-Case*, and the tragedy of *The Duchess of Malfy* were his other dramatic productions. It is said that Webster was clerk of St. Andrew's, Holborn, and that he died in 1625.

## FUNERAL DIRGE FOR MARCELLO in "THE WHITE DEVIL"

Call for the robin-redbreast, and the wren,  
 Since o'er shady groves they hover,  
 And with leaves and flowers do cover  
 The friendless bodies of unburied men.  
 Call unto his funeral dole

The ant, the field-mouse,  
 and the mole,  
 To raise him hillocks that  
 shall keep him warm,  
 And (when gay tombs are  
 robb'd) sustain no harm ;  
 But keep the wolf far thence,  
 that's foe to men,  
 For with his nails he'll dig  
 them up again.

From "THE DUCHESS  
 OF MALFY"

*Car.* Hence, villains, ty-  
 rants, murderers : alas !  
 What will you do with my  
 lady ? Call for help.

*Duch.* To whom ? to our  
 next neighbours ? They  
 are mad folks.

*Bosola.* Remove that noise.

*Duch.* Farewell, Cariola. . . .  
 I pray thee look thou giv'st  
 my little boy  
 Some syrup for his cold ; and  
 let the girl

Say her prayers ere she sleep.  
 —Now what you please ;  
 What death ?

*Bos.* Strangling. Here are  
 your executioners.

*Duch.* I forgive them.  
 The apoplexy, catarrh, or  
 cough o' the lungs,  
 Would do as much as they do.

*Bos.* Doth not death fright  
 you ?

*Duch.* Who would be  
 afraid on 't,  
 Knowing to meet such ex-  
 cellent company  
 In the other world ?

*Bos.* Yet, methinks,  
 The manner of your death should much afflict you :  
 This cord should terrify you.

*Duch.* Not a whit.  
 What would it pleasure me to have my throat cut  
 With diamonds ? or to be smother'd  
 With cassia ? or to be shot to death with pearls ?  
 I know, death hath ten thousand several doors  
 For men to take their exits : and 'tis found

# THE TRAGEDY OF THE DVTCHESSE Of Malfy.

*As it was Presented priuately, at the Black-  
 Friars; and publiquely at the Globe, By the  
 Kings Maiesties Seruants.*

The perfect and exact Coppy, with diuerse  
*things Printed, that the length of the Play would  
 not beare in the Preface.*

Written by John Webster.

*Nota. — Si quid —  
 — Candidus Imperis si non his uera nocum.*

*Jo: gates. . . .*

LONDON

Printed by NICHOLAS OSES, for Iohn  
 WATSON, and are to be sold at the  
 signe of the Crowne, in Pauls  
 Church-yard, 1623.

Title-page of Webster's "Duchess of Malfy," 1623



St. Andrew's Church, Holborn

Serve for mandragora to make me  
sleep.  
Go tell my brothers ; when I am  
laid out,  
They then may feed in quiet.  
[*They strangle her, kneeling.*]

From "THE DEVIL'S LAW-CASE"

*Romelio.* O, my lord, lie not idle :  
The chiefest action for a man of  
great spirit  
Is, never to be out of action. We  
should think ;  
The soul was never put into the  
body,  
Which has so many rare and curious  
pieces  
Of mathematical motion, to stand  
still.  
Virtue is ever sowing of her seeds :  
In the trenches for the soldier ; in  
the wakeful study  
For the scholar ; in the furrows of  
the sea  
For men of our profession : of all  
which  
Arise and spring up honour.

*John Marston*

**John Marston** (1575-1634)  
was born at Coventry in 1575 ;  
his mother was an Italian. He  
went up to Brasenose College,  
Oxford, early in 1592, and took  
his degree two years later. The  
earliest works Marston is known to

They go on such strange geome-  
trical hinges,  
You may open them both ways ;  
any way (for heaven's sake)  
So I were out of your whispering :  
tell my brothers,  
That I perceive, death (now I'm  
well awake)  
Best gift is, they can give or I can  
take.  
I would fain put off my last  
woman's fault ;  
I'd not be tedious to you. . . .  
Pull, and pull strongly, for your  
able strength  
Must pull down heaven upon me.  
Yet stay, heaven gates are not so  
highly arch'd  
As princes' palaces ; they that  
enter there  
Must go upon their knees. Come,  
violent death,

## THE WHITE DIVEL,

OR,

The Tragedy of *Paulo Giordano  
Urfini, Duke of Brachiano,*

With

The Life and Death of *Vittoria  
Corombona the famous  
Venetian Curtizan.*

*Acted by the Queenes Majesties Servants.*

Written by **IOHN WEBSTER.**

*Non inferiora secutus.*

LONDON,  
Printed by *N.O. for Thomas Archer*, and are to be sold  
at his Shop in Popes head Pallace, neere the  
Royall Exchange. 1612.

Title-page of Webster's "White Divel," 1612

have published are his satires, called *The Scourge of Villany*, and the voluptuous, half-sarcastic romance in six-line stanza, *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image*, both of 1598. His bitterness of tongue was so great that he was nicknamed "Kinsayder," one who crops or "kinses" the tails of dogs. From 1601 to 1607 he seems to have lived by writing for the stage. His most important pieces are *Antonio and Mellida*, in two parts (1602); *The Malcontent* (1604); *The Dutch Courtezan* (1605); *Parasitaster; or, The Fawn* (1606); and *What You Will* (1607). He entered the Church, long held an incumbency in Hampshire or Wiltshire, and died in the parish of Aldermanbury on June 25, 1634.

THE PROLOGUE TO THE SECOND  
PART OF "ANTONIO AND MELLIDA"  
("ANTONIO'S REVENGE")

The rawish dank of clumsy winter  
ramps  
The fluent summer's vein: and  
drizzling sleet  
Chilleth the wan bleak cheek of the  
numb'd earth,  
Whilst snarling gusts nibble the  
juiceless leaves  
From the naked shuddering branch,  
and pills the skin  
From off the soft and delicate as-  
pects.  
O, now methinks a sullen tragic  
scene  
Would suit the time with pleasing  
congruence!  
May we be happy in our weak  
devoir,  
And all part pleased in most wish'd  
content.  
But sweat of Hercules can ne'er  
beget  
So blest an issue. Therefore we  
proclaim,  
If any spirit breathes within this  
round  
Uncapable of weighty passion,

(As from his birth being hugged in the arms  
And nuzzled 'twixt the breasts of Happiness)  
Who winks and shuts his apprehension up  
From common sense of what men were, and are;  
Who would not know what men must be: let such  
Hurry amain from our black-visaged shows;  
We shall affright their eyes. But if a breast,  
Nail'd to the earth with grief; if any heart,  
Pierced through with anguish, pant within this ring.  
If there be any blood, whose heat is choked  
And stifled with true sense of misery:

THE  
HISTORY OF  
Antonio and  
Mellida.

*The first part.*

*As it hath beene sundry times acted,  
by the children of Paules.*

Written by J. M.

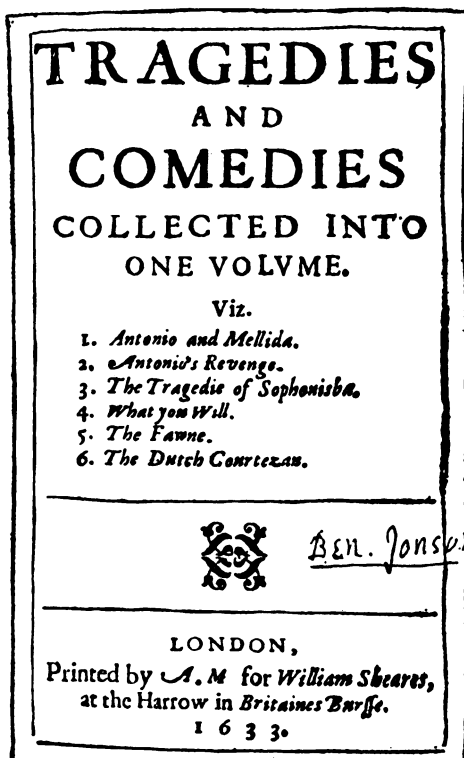


LONDON

Printed for Mathewe Lovnes, and Thomas Fisher  
are to be foulded in Saint Dunstons Church-yard  
1602.

Title-page of Marston's "Antonio and  
Mellida," 1602

If aught of these strains fill this consort up,  
 They arrive most welcome. O, that our power  
 Could lackey or keep wing with our desires ;  
 That with unused poise of style and sense  
 We might weigh massy in judicious scale !  
 Yet here's the prop that doth support our hopes :  
 When our scenes falter, or invention halts,  
 Your favour will give crutches to our faults.



Title-page of Marston's "Tragedies and Comedies," 1633

From Ben Jonson's copy, with his autograph

THE SCHOLAR AND HIS DOG, *from*  
 "WHAT YOU WILL"

I was a scholar : seven useful springs  
 Did I deflower in quotations  
 Of cross'd opinions 'bout the soul of man ;  
 The more I learnt, the more I learnt to  
 doubt.  
 Delight, my spaniel, slept, whilst I baised  
 (kissed) leaves,  
 Toss'd o'er the dunces, pored on the old  
 print  
 Of titled words : and still my spaniel slept.  
 Whilst I wasted lamp-oil, baited my flesh,  
 Shrunk up my veins : and still my spaniel  
 slept.  
 And still I held converse with Zabarell  
 Aquinas, Scotus, and the musty saw  
 Of antique Donate : still my spaniel slept.  
 Still on went I ; first, *an sit anima* ;  
 Then, an it were mortal. O hold, hold ; at  
 that  
 They're at brain-buffets, fell by the ears  
 amain  
 Pell-mell together : still my spaniel slept.  
 Then, whether 'twere corporeal, local, fix'd,  
*Ex traduce*, but whether 't had free will  
 Or no, hot philosophers  
 Stood banding factions, all so strongly  
 propp'd,  
 I stagger'd, knew not which was firmer part,  
 But thought, quoted, read, observed, and  
 pryed,  
 Stuff'd noting-books : and still my spaniel  
 slept.

At length he waked, and yawn'd ; and by yon sky,  
 For aught I know he knew as much as I.

Cyril Tour-  
 neur

It is believed that Cyril Tourneur (1575 ? -1626) was the son of Richard Tourneur, Governor of the Brill in Holland. Much of his life was probably spent in service in the Netherlands. In 1600 was published his outrageously metaphysical and obscure poem, *The Transform'd Metamorphosis*. His earliest play, *The Revenger's Tragedy*, was printed in 1607, and *The Atheist's Tragedy* in 1611. A third, *The Nobleman*, was licensed in 1612, but has been lost. Cyril Tourneur acted as the secretary of Sir Edward Cecil in the Cadiz expedition of 1625, and was among those disbanded soldiers who were put ashore at Kinsale on the return of the fleet. He was already ill, and he died in Ireland, in utter destitution, on February 28, 1626.



## From "THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY"

Here's an eye  
 Able to tempt a great man—to serve God ;  
 A pretty hanging lip, that has forgot now to dissemble.  
 Methinks this mouth should make a swearer tremble ;  
 A drunkard clasp his teeth, and not undo 'em,  
 To suffer wet damnation to run through 'em.  
 Here's a cheek keeps her colour let the wind go whistle ;  
 Spout rain, we fear thee not : be hot or cold,  
 All's one with us : and is not he absurd,  
 Whose fortunes are upon their faces set,  
 That fear no other God but wind and wet ?  
 Does the silkworm expend her yellow  
 labours

For thee ? for thee does she undo herself ?  
 Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships,  
 For the poor benefit of a bewitching  
 minute ?

Why does yon fellow falsify highways,  
 And put his life between the judge's lips,  
 To refine such a thing ? keep his horse and  
 men,

To beat their valours for her ?  
 Surely we're all mad people, and they  
 Whom we think are, are not.  
 Does every proud and self-affecting dame  
 Camphire her face for this ? and grieve her  
 Maker

In sinful baths of milk, when many an in-  
 fant starves,  
 For her superfluous outside, for all this ?  
 Who now bids twenty pound a night ?  
 prepares

Music, perfumes, and sweetmeats ? all are  
 hush'd.

Thou mayst lie chaste now ! it were fine,  
 methinks,

To have thee seen at revels, forgetful feasts,  
 And unclean brothels : sure 'twould fright  
 the sinner,

And make him a good coward : put a re-  
 veller

Out of his antick amble,  
 And cloy an epicure with empty dishes.

Here might a scornful and ambitious woman  
 Look through and through herself.—See, ladies, with false forms  
 You deceive men, but cannot deceive worms.

## From "THE ATHEIST'S TRAGEDY"

Walking upon the fatal shore,  
 Among the slaughter'd bodies of their men,  
 Which the full-stomach'd sea had cast upon  
 The sands, it was my unhappy chance to light  
 Upon a face, whose favour when it lived  
 My astonish'd mind inform'd me I had seen.  
 He lay in his armour, as if that had been  
 His coffin ; and the weeping sea (like one

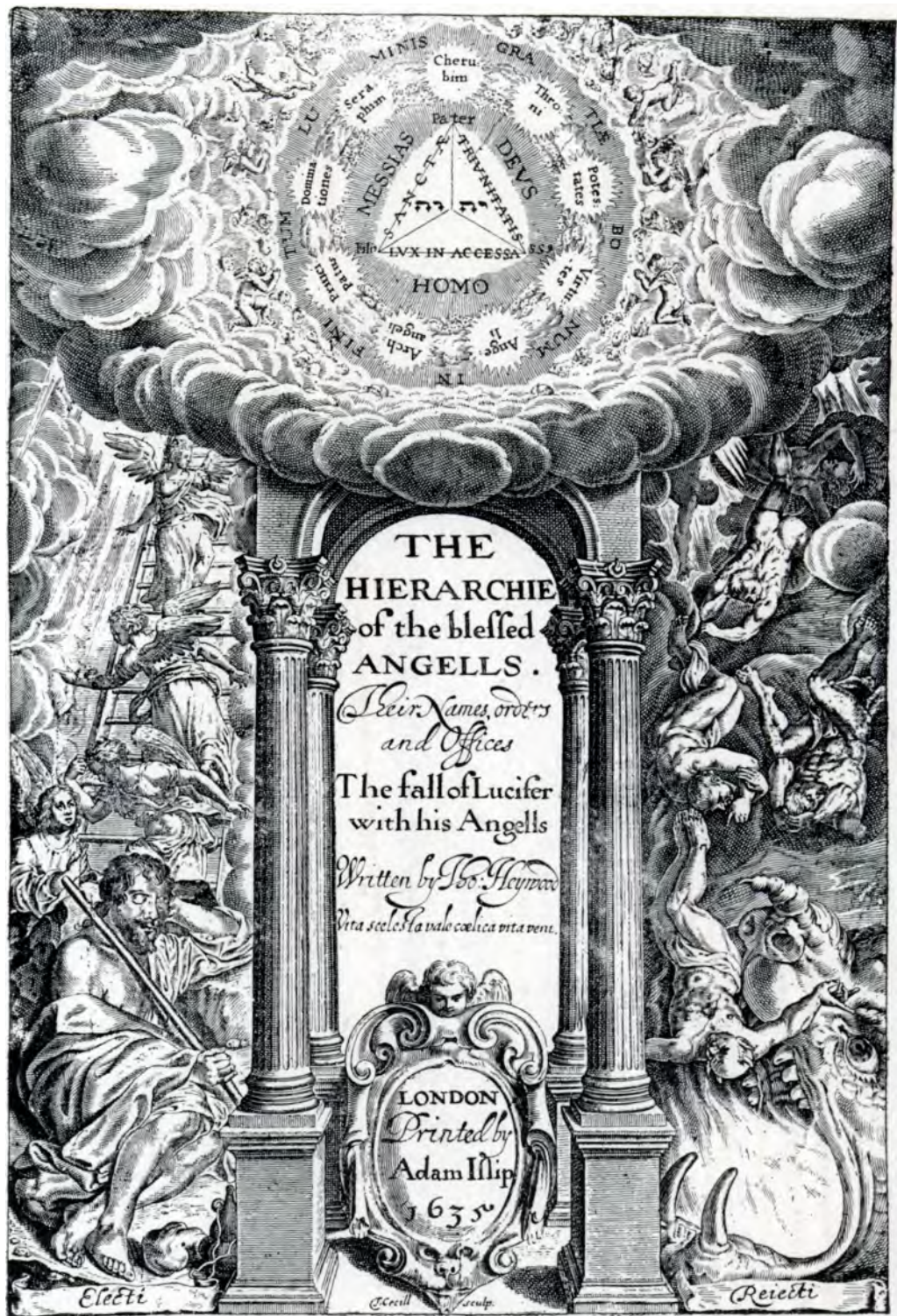
# THE REVENGERS TRAGÆDIE.

*As it hath bene sundry times Acted,  
 by the Kings Majesties  
 Servants.*



AT LONDON.  
 Printed by G. E. L. D., and are to be sold at his  
 house in Fleete-lane at the signe of the  
 Printers-Preffe.  
 1607.

Title-page of Cyril Tournour's "The  
 Revenger's Tragedy," 1607



Title-page of Heywood's "Hierarchy of the Blessed Angel," 1635



Whose milder temper doth lament the death  
 Of him whom in his rage he slew) runs up  
 The shore, embraces him, kisses his cheek ;  
 Goes back again, and forces up the sands  
 To bury him ; and every time it parts,  
 Sheds tears upon him ; till at last (as if  
 It could no longer endure to see the man

Whom it had slain, yet loath  
 to leave him) with  
 A kind of unresolved unwilling  
 pace,  
 Winding her waves one in  
 another (like  
 A man that folds his arms, or  
 wrings his hands,  
 For grief) ebb'd from the  
 body, and descends ;  
 As if it would sink down into  
 the earth,  
 And hide itself for shame of  
 such a deed.

The one fact about THOMAS HEYWOOD which is universally known is that Charles Lamb called him "a sort of prose Shakespeare." This genial expression, divorced from its context, has been a stumbling-block to many readers who have turned to *A Challenge for Beauty* or to *The Fair Maid of the Exchange*, and have been disappointed to meet there with some beauty, indeed, but with slovenly qualities the reverse of Shakespearean. But Lamb's too-telling phrase should not be quoted alone ; it is true that he was carried away

by the enthusiasm of the discoverer so far as to say that Heywood's "scenes are to the full as natural and affecting" as Shakespeare's ; yet he immediately qualified this excess of praise by adding, "but we miss *the Poet*, that which in Shakespeare always appears out of and above the surface of the nature. Heywood's characters, his country gentlemen, and so on, are exactly what we see, but of the best kind of what we see, in life." These words excellently indicate the tendency of this dramatist, whose merit lies not in the intensity and splendour of his fancy, or in his power over terror and pain, but in his



Thomas  
Heywood

Allegorical plate from the "Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels," with portraits of Charles I. and his Family

humane simplicity. Nowhere in the Jacobean age do we seem to come so close to the ordinary conversation of the day, unrevised and unadorned. What Heywood lacks is distinction; he is content to be an indefatigable hackney writer, incessantly and without ambition engaged in amusing and awakening his contemporaries. The people whom Heywood collects before us in such plays as *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and *The English Traveller* are natural and, even in their errors, amiable. He does not deal in heroes and monsters, like so many of his fellow playwrights. In them a violence is notable, an uplifting of the whole soul in arms to resist fate and to perish, if necessary, in the struggle. But Heywood's gentle talent does not strive or cry; he loves to depict submission, reconciliations, facile intrigues which are "very delectable and full of mirth." Besides the domestic plays by which this poet is best known, he wrote a considerable number of classical entertainments, half serious dramas, half burlesques, ingenious and extraordinary, of which *The Rape of Lucrece* is the type, and a mass of pseudo-philosophical verse, garrulous and prosy, the most curious specimen of which is *The Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels*, a sort of analysis of the universe, visible and invisible.

It is probable that **Thomas Heywood** was born about 1575 in Lincolnshire. He was educated at Cambridge, and became a fellow of Peterhouse. During his residence at the University he became deeply interested in the stage, and doubtless contributed to the "tragedies, comedies, histories, pastorals, and shows" which he tells us were acted in his time by "graduates of good place." In 1596 he came to London and wrote a play for the Lord Admiral's Company, to which in 1598 we find him regularly attached as an actor. Of the dramas which he composed at this time, *The Four Prentices of London* is probably the only one which survives. We have, however, a series of tame chronicle-plays which seem to date from 1600. Heywood's masterpiece, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, was produced in 1602 (printed in 1607). In the very interesting preface to *The English Traveller*, which was not published until 1633, Heywood tells us that this tragic-comedy is but "one reserved amongst two hundred and twenty, in which I have had either an entire hand or at the least a main finger." Even at that date, many of these plays had "been negligently lost," and Heywood adds that "it never was any great ambition in me to be in this kind volumuously read." Of his vast body of dramatic writing, therefore, we may be surprised that so many as twenty-four complete plays have come down to us. Of his more ambitious, but less successful, non-dramatic works, *Troja Britannica* was published in 1609, *Gunaikeion, or, Nine Books Concerning Women* in 1624, and *The Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels* in 1635. He disappears after 1641.

From "THE ENGLISH TRAVELLER"

(A Carousal)

Young Geraldine.                      This gentleman and I  
Pass'd but just now by your next neighbour's house,  
Where, as they say, dwells one young Lionel,  
Wincott. An unthrift youth : his father now at sea.  
Young Ger. . . . There this night





Title-page of Heywood's "Gunaikeion," 1624



Was a great feast. . . .  
 In the height of their carousing, all their brains  
 Warm'd with the heat of wine, discourse was offer'd  
 Of ships and storms at sea : when suddenly,  
 Out of his giddy wildness, one conceives  
 The room wherein they quaff'd to be a pinnace,  
 Moving and floating, and the confused noise  
 To be the murmuring winds, gusts, mariners ;  
 That their unsteadfast footing did proceed  
 From rocking of the vessel : this conceived,  
 Each one begins to apprehend the danger,  
 And to look out for safety. Fly, saith one,  
 Up to the main top, and discover. He  
 Climbs by the bed-post to the tester, there  
 Reports a turbulent sea and tempest towards ;  
 And wills them, if they'll save their ship and lives,  
 To cast their lading overboard. At this  
 All fall to work, and hoist into the street,  
 As to the sea, what next came to their hand,  
 Stools, tables, tressels, trenchers, bedsteads, cups,  
 Pots, plate, and glasses. Here a fellow whistles ;  
 They take him for the boatswain : one lies struggling  
 Upon the floor, as if he swam for life :  
 A third takes the base-viol for the cock-boat,  
 Sits in the belly on 't, labours, and rows ;  
 His oar, the stick with which the fiddler play'd ;  
 A fourth bestrides his fellow, thinking to 'scape  
 (As did Arion) on the dolphin's back,  
 Still fumbling on a gittern.—The rude multitude,  
 Watching without, and gaping for the spoil  
 Cast from the windows, went by the ears about it ;  
 The constable is called to atone the broil ;  
 Which done, and hearing such a noise within  
 Of eminent shipwreck, enters the house, and finds them  
 In this confusion : they adore his staff,  
 And think it Neptune's trident ; and that he  
 Comes with his Tritons (so they call'd his watch)  
 To calm the tempest and appease the waves :  
 And at this point we left them.

From "THE BRAZEN AGE" (1613)

(*Phæbus speaks*)

Sometimes I cast my eye upon the sea,  
 To see the tumbling seal or porpoise play.  
 There see I merchants trading, and their sails  
 Big-bellied with the wind ; sea-fights sometimes  
 Rise with their smoke-thick clouds to dark my beams ;  
 Sometimes I fix my face upon the earth,  
 With my warm fervour to give metals, trees,  
 Herbs, plants, and flowers, life. Here in gardens walk  
 Loose ladies with their lovers arm in arm.  
 Yonder the labouring ploughman drives his team.  
 Further I may behold main battles pitch'd ;  
 And whom I favour most (by the wind's help)  
 I can assist with my transparent rays.  
 Here spy I cattle feeding ; forests there  
 Stored with wild beasts ; here shepherds with their lasses,

Piping beneath the trees while their flocks graze.  
 In cities I see trading, walking, bargaining,  
 Buying and selling, goodness, badness, all things—  
 And shine alike on all. . . .  
 No emperor walks forth, but I see his state ;  
 Nor sports, but I his pastimes can behold.  
 I see all coronations, funerals,  
 Marts, fairs, assemblies, pageants, sights and shows.  
 No hunting, but I better see the chase  
 Than they that rouse the game. What see not I ?  
 There's not a window, but my beams break in ;  
 No chink or cranny, but my rays pierce through ;  
 And there I see, O Vulcan, wondrous things :  
 Things that thyself, nor any god besides,  
 Would give belief to.

There is no body of writing in which the faults and the merits of the Jacobean age can be studied to more advantage than in the breathless and agitated plays of THOMAS MIDDLETON. Here

Thomas  
Middleton

all that is inconsistent, all qualities that are incompatible, are jumbled together in the strangest confusion. Here we have a brazen indelicacy married to an almost feminine susceptibility to natural and verbal beauty ; Romance, in its most preposterous forms, running side by side with a plain domestic realism ; a capacity for the most thrilling revelations of the inmost secrets of the heart combined with an absence of all skill in portraiture, and the dullest acceptance of ethical caricature. It is impossible to find any general terms in which to describe the style and temper of Middleton, since what is true of one page is utterly false of the next. As a dramatist, pure and simple, however, this may be said that his extraordinary fluency and picturesqueness alternately



Thomas Middleton

*From the frontispiece to the "Two New Plays" of 1657*

support and betray him, so that the impression of life, of bustling and crowded vitality, which he hardly ever fails to produce, is now seductive and now wearying or even repulsive, according as the cleverness of the playwright wanes or waxes, that "indefatigable ingenuity" of which Mr. Swinburne so justly speaks being too often wasted upon obscure and ill-digested themes accepted too hastily by a rash and unbalanced judgment. At his best—in the character of De Flores in *The Changeling*, in the tragic pathos of *A Fair Quarrel*, in much of the graceful intrigue of *The Spanish Gipsy*—the poetic spirit of Middleton is prodigal in its manifestations. But the mention of these very noble dramas reminds us of another fact, which

adds to our difficulty in exacting apprising or even analysing his genius. In all his best works we are left to conjecture what portions are really his, and what are due to the collaboration of a poet even more shadowy than himself, WILLIAM ROWLEY. These two are inextricably mingled, and what is further puzzling is that such plays as seem to be entirely written by the one or the other do not display such characteristics of individual style as greatly aid us in distinguishing them. But *A Game of Chess* is supposed to display the solitary Middleton and *A Match at Midnight* the unaided Rowley, and of

these we may make what we can. Each of these dramatists combined, too, with Dekker, and the confusion of their styles is past all hope of unravelling. Middleton seems, however, to have been the more mellifluous versifier, the more conscious poet, of the two; and Rowley the more sturdy and more strenuous painter of character. Little, however, can be said with confidence, and Middleton and Rowley must be content to live together, inextricably intertwined, like Beaumont and Fletcher.

It has been supposed that **Thomas Middleton** (1570?-1627) was born in London; his father was a gentleman of that city. The poet was admitted a member of Gray's Inn in 1593,



Title-page of Middleton's "Game at Chess," 1624

having already, as is believed, begun to write for the stage. His earliest surviving independent play is *Blurt, Master Constable*, printed in 1602. Middleton is the author, or part author, of about twenty-three plays which are still in existence, and we have no reason to suppose that we possess more than a fragment of the work which he poured forth with a careless volubility. Of the best known of his plays a list may here be given, with the dates of publication: *Michaelmas Term* (1607), *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1608), *A Fair Quarrel* (1617), *The Changeling* (1653—acted 1624), *The Spanish Gipsy* (1653), *Woman Beware Women* (1657). In 1620 Middleton was appointed City Chronologer, and in 1623 was living at Newington Butts. In 1624 he produced a political and patriotic drama, *A Game of Chess*, which was successful beyond all precedent, but was so offensive to the Spanish Ambassador that he complained to King

James, and poet and actors were sharply reprimanded and fined. Middleton died at Newington, where he was buried on July 4, 1627. Jonson called him "a base fellow," but it is not known what grounds he had for this charge. Another contemporary says, on the other hand :

Facetious Middleton, thy witty muse  
Hath pleased all that books or men peruse ;  
If any thee despise, he doth but show  
Antipathy to wit in daring so ;  
Thy fame's above his malice, and 'twill be  
Dispraise enough for him to censure thee.

Of **William Rowley** scarcely a single personal fact is known, except that he was an actor in several companies from about 1607 to 1627. It has been conjectured that he lived on until 1642. The chief plays in which he was unassisted are *A New Wonder* (1632), *A Match at Midnight* (1633), and *A Shoemaker a Gentleman* (1638).

From "BLURT, MASTER  
CONSTABLE "

Ah ! how can I sleep ? He,  
who truly loves,  
Burns out the day in idle  
fantasies ;  
And when the lamb bleating  
doth bid good-night  
Unto the closing day, then  
tears begin  
To keep quick time unto the  
owl, whose voice  
Shrieks like the bellman in  
the lover's ears :  
Love's eye the jewel of sleep,  
O ! seldom wears  
The early lark is waken'd  
from her bed,  
Being only by love's plaints  
disquieted ;

And singing in the morning's ear she weeps,  
Being deep in love, at lovers' broken sleeps.  
But say a golden slumber chance to tie  
With silken strings the cover of love's eye ;  
Then dreams, magician-like, mocking present  
Pleasures, whose fading leaves more discontent.

## A Faire Quarrell.

With new Additions of M<sup>r</sup>. Chaughts and  
*Trimstrams* Roaring, and the Bauds Song.  
*Never before Printed.*

*As it was Acted before the King, by the Prince  
his Highnesse Seruants.*

{ Written by *Thomas Middleton*, } Gent.  
and *William Rowley*.

*William  
Rowley*



Printed at London for J. T. and are to be sold at Christ  
Church Gate. 1617.

Title-page of Middleton and Rowley's  
"Fair Quarrel," 1617

## THE PRELUDE TO THE DUEL in "A FAIR QUARREL"

*Enter COLONEL and his two Friends.**1st Friend.* He's come ; do you but draw : we'll fight it for you.*Captain.* I know too much to grant that.*1st Friend.* O dead manhood !

Had ever such a cause so faint a servant ?

Shame brand me if I do not suffer for him.

*Colonel.* I've heard, sir, you've been guilty of much boasting

For your brave earliness at such a meeting.

You've lost the glory of that way this morning :

I was the first to-day.

*Capt.* So were you ever

In my respect, sir.

*1st Friend.* O most base præludium*Capt.* I never thought on victory our mistress

With greater reverence than I have your worth,

Nor ever loved her better.

Success in you has been my absolute joy,

And when I've wish'd content I've wish'd your friendship.

*Col.* I came not hither, sir, for an encomium.

I came provided

For storms and tempests, and the foulest season

That ever rage let forth, or blew in wildness, From the incensed prison of man's blood.

*Capt.* 'Tis otherwise with me : I come with mildness,

Peace, constant amity, and calm forgiveness, The weather of a Christian and a friend.

*1st Friend.* Give me a valiant Turk, though not worth tenpence.*Capt.* Yet, sir, the world will judge the injury mine,

Insufferable mine, mine beyond injury.

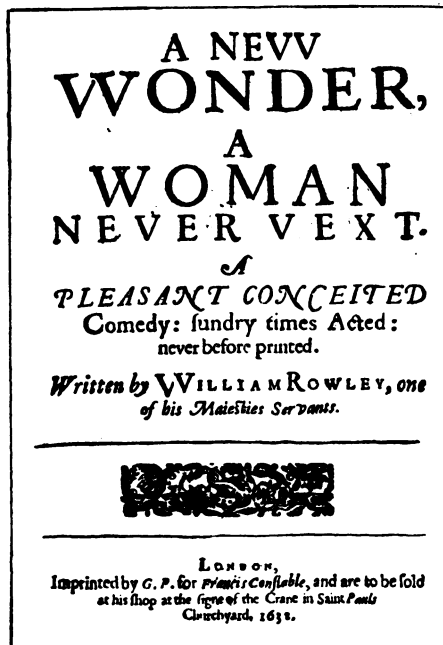
Thousands have made a less wrong reach to hell,

Ay and rejoiced in his most endless vengeance

(A miserable triumph though a just one) .

But when I call to memory our long friendship,  
 Methinks it cannot be too great a wrong  
 That then I should not pardon. Why should man  
 For a poor hasty syllable or two  
 (And vented only in forgetful fury)  
 Chain all the hopes and riches of his soul  
 To the revenge of that ? die lost for ever ?  
 For he that makes his last peace with his Maker  
 In anger, anger is his peace eternally :  
 He must expect the same return again,  
 Whose venture is deceitful. Must he not, sir ?

*Col.* I see what I must do, fairly put up again,  
 For here 'll be nothing done, I perceive that.

*Capt.* What shall be done in such a worthless business

Title-page of "A New Wonder, a Woman Never Vexed," 1632



But to be sorry and to be forgiven ?  
You, sir, to bring repentance ; and I pardon.

*Col.* I bring repentance, sir ?

*Capt.* If't be too much

To say, repentance ; call it what you please, sir,  
Choose your own word ; I know you're sorry for it  
And that's as good.

*Col.* I sorry ? by fame's honour, I am wrong'd :  
Do you seek for peace and draw the quarrel larger ?

*Capt.* Then 'tis I'm sorry that I thought you so.

*1st Friend.* A captain ! I could gnaw his title off.

*Capt.* Nor is it any misbecoming virtue, sir,  
In the best manliness, to repent a wrong :  
Which made me bold with you.

*1st Friend.* I could cuff his head off.

*2nd Friend.* Nay, pish.

*Col.* So once again take thou thy  
peaceful rest then ; [*To his sword.*  
But as I put thee up, I must proclaim  
This captain here, both to his friends  
and mine,

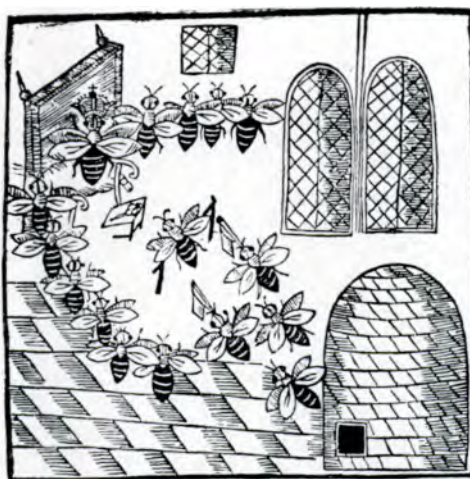
That only came to see fair valour  
righted,

A base submissive coward : so I leave  
him.

*Capt.* O, Heaven has pitied my ex-  
cessive patience,  
And sent me a cause : now I have a  
cause :

A coward I was never.—Come you  
back, sir.

Of many of the Jacobean dramatists so large a portion of their work is lost that we run the risk of misjudging what was the general character of that work. We are apt to take for granted that a remarkable specimen which has survived is typical of what its author wrote, when, perhaps, if we knew more, we should see that it was entirely exceptional. This is perhaps the case with JOHN DAY, who was a very prolific dramatist, of whose innumerable pieces only six survive. Of these, the rhymed masque of *The Parliament of Bees* is so predominant in charm, that we have come to think of Day as a writer standing alone in the loud Jacobean market-place, presenting none but delicate and fantastic wares of exquisite lyrical workmanship. But Day's other dramas, although not one is without evidence of a sweetness and amenity of disposition peculiar to this author, are not strikingly dissimilar from those of others, as in particular of Fletcher, whom Day imitated in his intrigue, and of Dekker. At a somewhat later date, THOMAS NABBES produced a moral masque of *Microcosmus*, which stands out among his gentle and somewhat ineffectual writings in a prominent way. It is well to observe



**T**He Parliament is held, Bills and Complaints  
Heard and reform'd, with severall restraints  
Of usurpt freedom ; instituted Law  
To keepe the Common Wealth of Bees in awe

Woodcut illustration from John Day's  
"Parliament of Bees," 1641

that the true Elizabethan sweetness of fancy, a perfume of the Heliconian honey, still lingered about English drama long after the elements of the playhouse had become realistic and mundane ; there was still something of childhood about stage-poetry, although it had grown so adult and rough.

It is possible that **John Day** was born about 1575 ; he was educated, from 1592 onwards, at Caius College, Cambridge. The earliest record of his theatrical career which has come down to us is an entry in Henslowe's *Diary* of 1599, showing that he was then already an actor-playwright. All his early plays are lost, except *The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green* (1600). His *Parliament of Bees* was acted, and perhaps printed, in 1607, but the earliest edition extant is of 1641. Of his ordinary plays, the most lively is *The Isle of Gulls*, printed in 1606. Day died in or about the year 1640. **Thomas Nabbes** is thought to have been born at Worcester. His comedy of *Covent Garden* was acted in 1632. The most graceful of Nabbes' writings, his *Microcosmus*, appeared in 1637, and another masque, *The Spring's Glory*, in 1638, after which date Nabbes disappears.

From "THE PARLIAMENT OF BEES"

*Oberon.* A female bee ! thy character ?

*Flora.* Flora, Oberon's gardener,  
Huswife both of herbs and flowers,  
To strew thy shrine, and trim thy bowers,  
With violets, roses, eglantine,  
Daffadown, and blue columbine,  
Hath forth the bosom of the spring  
Pluck'd this nosegay, which I bring  
From Eleusis (mine own shrine)  
To thee, a monarch all divine ;  
And, as true impost of my grove,  
Present it to great Oberon's love,

*Oberon.* Honey-dews refresh thy meads ;  
Cowslips spring with golden heads  
July-flowers and carnations wear  
Leaves double-streak'd, with maid'n-nair ;  
May thy lilies taller grow,  
Thy violets fuller sweetness owe ;  
And last of all, may Phœbus love  
To kiss thee ; and frequent thy grove,  
As thou in service true shalt be  
Unto our crown and royalty.

*Philip  
Massinger*

When we reach the work of PHILIP MASSINGER, we are already conscious that English drama has begun to hasten upon its downward course. What the glorious example of Shakespeare could not give it, it failed to receive from the learning and enthusiasm of Jonson, and after this point almost every accident was damaging. One blow after another weakened and distracted it ; almost year by year, and with a sinister rapidity, it sank into desuetude. The retirement of Shakespeare and the death of Beaumont placed tragedy and romantic comedy mainly in the lax hands of Fletcher, who for some eight years more poured forth his magnanimous and sunshiny plays, so musical, so dissolute, so fantastic. Then to the wearied Fletcher is added the young, skilful and earnest talent of Massinger, who, about 1624,

is found taking his place as the most active and popular dramatic poet of the hour. As the flood of unequal, hurried plays by the minor survivors of an earlier generation begins to slacken, Massinger for a while practically holds the field. In many respects his talent was an admirable one, and the criticism which treats Massinger with contempt is led astray by comparing him at disadvantageous points with his most brilliant predecessors.

It is, however, impossible to study Massinger without ejaculating "The glory is departing." He writes with vigour, but he never attains to the impetus of Fletcher; his versification is tamer than any which we have yet met with since the great revival; his construction is prosier, without gaining coherency. One signal merit of Massinger is his serious and solid conception of duty and responsibility, but we have, in exchange for his moral gravity, to resign ourselves to the loss of all fire and colour. It is not to the sober author of *The Bondman* and *The City Madam* that we come for the tumultuous ecstasy which carried Webster and Middleton on its wings. But we must not seek for intensity or passion in Massinger's pages. He was essentially a writer for the public stage and for large popular audiences. His aim seems to have been to win



**Philip Massinger**

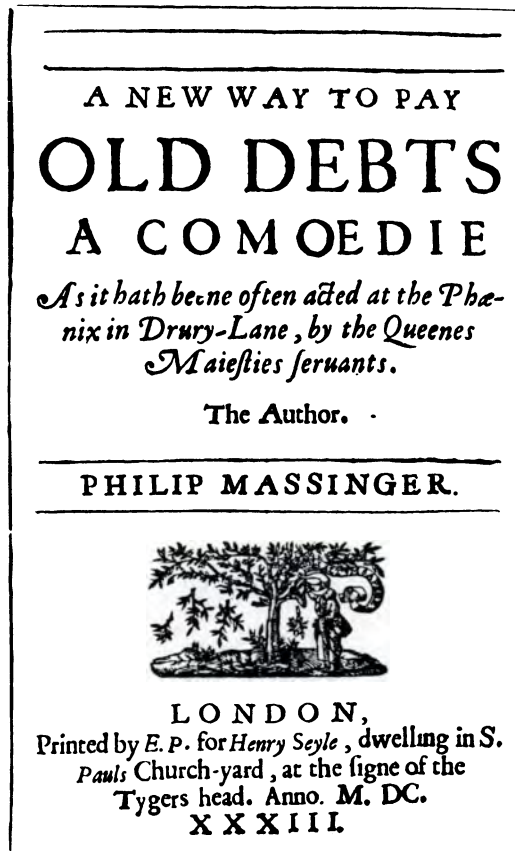
*After the frontispiece to his plays*

these last back to the theatre by abandoning the over-lyrical and over-fantastic elements which the poets had introduced. Massinger knew that it is not by extravagant and obscure appeals to the imagination that the idle public is to be amused after its dinner. He sat down to produce prosaic, decorous, interesting pieces—tragedies not remarkable for stateliness, comedies from which humour is almost absent—which should possess decorum of movement, variety of interest, and that "equability of all the passions" which the public mind was beginning to crave after the violence of those appeals which two generations of poets had made upon it in their ecstasy.

In Massinger there existed an element which has become inappreciable to us, but which greatly added to his power and popularity in his own time.

This was the courage with which he adapted his art to the illustration of current political and social events. To us *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* is merely a very well-constructed comedy; to Massinger's contemporaries it was a solemn, almost a religious satire on those monopolists who, like the execrated Sir Giles Mompessen, were the scourge of the poor and of the middle classes. In *The Great Duke of Florence* we read an agreeable and genial

tragi-comedy; to Massinger's audience it was a comment, playful and bold, on that stirring event of the hour, Buckingham's expedition to the island of Rhé. A lost play, *The King and the Subject*, contained a criticism of ship-money so direct that it brought down upon the playwright the sovereign's displeasure; "this is too insolent," said Charles I., "and must be changed." The ideals of political and personal virtue in the mind of Massinger were very high. Unfortunately, as his portrait testifies, there was an element of weakness in him, and he stooped to the low tastes of the vulgar minds whom it was his business to amuse. As Gardiner has acutely noted, "in vain he sought to still the remonstrances of his conscience by arguing that the mere representation of evil conveyed a reproof." This was not the spirit in which the real opponents of public indelicacy, such as Prynne, in that "scourge of stage-



Title-page of "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," 1633

players," his snarling *Histriomastix* of 1632, found it effective to appeal to the scared consciences of English pleasure-seekers.

Less than the customary uncertainty hangs over the career of **Philip Massinger** (1583-1638). He was the son of Arthur Massinger, a gentleman who "happily spent many years, and died" in the service of the Earls of Pembroke. The poet was born at Salisbury, where he was baptized on November 24, 1583. There is an impression that he was page to the Countess; but on May 14, 1602, he was entered as a commoner of St. Alban Hall, Oxford. The Earl of Pembroke paid his college expenses during the four years he was at the University, and was displeased to find that he "gave his mind more to poetry and romances than to

logic and philosophy, which he ought to have done." In 1606 he came up to London, and "betook himself to writing plays," but we are left very much in

To my Honorable Friend  
 Francis Foljambe Esq  
 and Baronet.

W<sup>th</sup> my service I present his books  
 a bribe & comfort, but pray you look  
 upon his tender, not his gift, w<sup>th</sup> your  
 accustomed favor, and upon it will induce  
 your story to be bitter. Some things here may be  
 you'll find in his person fit for mine  
 to give to one of honor, and may please  
 in your defense, though you defend to read  
 a pamphlet of this nature. may it please  
 in your just judgement. though not necessary  
 yet fit to find a pardon, and I'll say  
 upon your warrant that it is a play

ever at your command

Philip Massinger

Facsimile Letter from Massinger to Sir Francis Foljambe

the dark as to the exact nature of his lost productions during the first fifteen years of his authorship. A *Very Woman*, however, we know to have been acted at Court in 1621. Of the very fine play called *The Virgin Martyr*, the greater



part is probably Dekker's, but *The Duke of Milan* (1623) is certainly entirely the work of Massinger. *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* must have been acted about the same time, though it was not printed until 1632. During the last years of James I., Massinger produced four of his strongest dramas: *The Bondman*, *The Renegado*, *The Parliament of Love*, and *The Great Duke of Florence*. He himself believed *The Roman Actor* to be "the most perfect birth of my Minerva." On the morning of March 17, 1638, Massinger, who had apparently been perfectly well the night before, was found dead in his bed in his house in Bankside: he was buried next day, as "a stranger," in the church of St. Saviour's, Southwark, in a grave which already contained the bones of his friend and master, Fletcher.

*From "THE CITY MADAM"*

*Luke.* 'Twas no fantastic object, but a truth ;  
 A real truth, no dream. I did not slumber ;  
 And could wake ever with a brooding eye  
 To gaze upon it ! it did endure the touch ;  
 I saw, and felt it. Yet what I beheld  
 And handled oft, did so transcend belief  
 (My wonder and astonishment pass'd o'er)  
 I faintly could give credit to my senses.  
 Thou dumb magician, that without a charm [To the key.  
 Didst make my entrance easy, to possess  
 What wise men wish and toil for ! Hermes' moly ;  
 Sibylla's golden bough ; the great elixir,  
 Imagined only by the alchymist,  
 Compared with thee, are shadows ; thou the substance  
 And guardian of felicity. No marvel,  
 My brother made thy place of rest his bosom,  
 Thou being the keeper of his heart, a mistress  
 To be hugg'd ever. In by-corners of  
 This sacred room, silver, in bags heap'd up,  
 Like billets saw'd and ready for the fire,  
 Unworthy to hold fellowship with bright gold,  
 That flow'd about the room, conceal'd itself.  
 There needs no artificial light ; the splendour  
 Makes a perpetual day there, night and darkness  
 By that still-burning lamp for ever banish'd.  
 But when, guided by that, my eyes had made  
 Discovery of the caskets, and they open'd,  
 Each sparkling diamond from itself shot forth  
 A pyramid of flames, and in the roof  
 Fix'd it a glorious star, and made the place  
 Heaven's abstract, or epitome : rubies, sapphires,  
 And ropes of orient pearl, these seen, I could not  
 But look on gold with contempt : and yet I found  
 What weak credulity could have no faith in,  
 A treasure far exceeding these. Here lay  
 A manor bound fast in a skin of parchment ;  
 The wax continuing hard, the acres melting :  
 Here a sure deed of gift for a market town,  
 If not redeem'd this day ; which is not in  
 The unthrift's power ; there being scarce one shire  
 In Wales or England, where my moneys are not  
 Lent out at usury, the certain hook  
 To draw in more.

*From "A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS"*

*Lord Lovell.* Are you not frighted with the imprecations  
And curses of whole families, made wretched  
By your sinister practices?

*Sir Giles Overreach.* Yes, as rocks are  
When foamy billows split themselves against  
Their flinty ribs; or as the moon is moved,  
When wolves, with hunger pined, howl at her brightness.  
I am of a solid temper, and, like these,  
Steer on a constant course: with mine own sword,  
If call'd into the field, I can make that right,  
Which fearful enemies murmur'd at as wrong.  
Now, for those other piddling complaints,  
Breathed out in bitterness; as, when they call me  
Extortioner, tyrant, cormorant, or intruder  
On my poor neighbour's right, or grand encloser  
Of what was common to my private use;  
Nay, when my ears are pierced with widows' cries,  
And undone orphans wash with tears my threshold;  
I only think what 'tis to have my daughter  
Right honourable; and 'tis a powerful charm,  
Makes me insensible of remorse or pity,  
Or the least sting of conscience.

*Lovell.* I admire  
The toughness of your nature.

*Sir Giles.* 'Tis for you,  
My lord, and for my daughter, I am marble.

One of the most accomplished of the later generation of actor-dramatists, **Nathaniel Field** (1587-1633), who was born in London in October 1587, was the son of a Puritan preacher who died early in 1588, and a younger brother of Theophilus Field, afterwards Bishop of Hereford. At the age of twelve he was made one of the Children of the Queen's Chapel, and he created the principal rôles in several of Ben Jonson's plays. He was considered, after the death of Burbage, the best actor of his day. Field wrote two very clever comedies—*A Woman a Weathercock*, published in 1612, and *Amends for Ladies* (1618); he also collaborated with Massinger in *The Fatal Dowry* (1632). He was unhappily married, and very jealous; this doubtless accounts for the excessive severity with which women are treated in his plays. Field died on February 20, 1633, and was buried at Blackfriars.

*From "THE FATAL DOWRY"*

*Charalois.* How like a silent stream shaded with night,  
And gliding softly with our windy sighs,  
Moves the whole frame of this solemnity!  
Tears, sighs, and blacks, filling the sinile;  
Whilst I, the only murmur in this grove  
Of death, thus hollowly break forth!—Vouchsafe  
To stay awhile. Rest, rest in peace, dear earth!  
Thou that broughtst rest to their unthankful lives,  
Whose cruelty denied thee rest in death!  
Here stands thy poor executor, thy son,  
That makes his life prisoner to bail thy death;  
Who gladlier puts on this captivity,  
Than virgins, long in love, their wedding weeds,  
Of all that ever thou hast done good to,

These only have good memories ; for they  
 Remember best, forget not gratitude.  
 I thank you for this last and friendly love.  
 And though this country, like a viperous mother,  
 Not only hath eat up ungratefully  
 All means of thee, her son, but last thyself,  
 Leaving thy heir so bare and indigent,  
 He cannot raise thee a poor monument,  
 Such as a flatterer or an usurer hath ;  
 Thy worth in every honest breast builds one,  
 Making their friendly hearts thy funeral stone.



**Nathaniel Field**

*After the portrait at Dulwich*

*Pontalier.* Sir !

*Charalois.* Peace ! O peace ! This scene is wholly mine—

What ! weep you, soldiers ?—blanch not.

—Romont weeps.—

Ha ! let me see ! my miracle is eased ;  
 The jailers and the creditors do weep ;  
 Ev'n they that make us weep, do weep themselves.

Be these thy body's balm ; these and thy virtue

Keep thy fame ever odoriferous,

Whilst the great, proud, rich, undeserving man,

Alive stinks in his vices, and, being vanish'd,

The golden calf that was an idol, deck'd  
 With marble pillars, jet and porphyry,  
 Shall quickly both in bone and name consume,

Though wrapp'd in lead, spice, cerecloth, and perfume.

*Creditor.* Sir !

*Charalois.* What !—away for shame,  
 —you, profane rogues,

Must not be mingled with these holy relics :

This is a sacrifice—our shower shall crown  
 His sepulchre with olive, myrrh, and bays,  
 The plants of peace, of sorrow, victory :  
 Your tears would spring but weeds.

*John Ford*

The quenching of the dramatic fire was now rapid and final, but in a brief blaze of the sinking embers we encounter JOHN FORD, perhaps as genuine a tragic poet as any of his forerunners, Shakespeare alone excepted. In his best plays we revert for a moment to the old magnificence of diction, the haughty disregard of convention, the contempt for ethical restrictions. What we do not return to is the brocaded richness of the Elizabethan age. Ford is austere and somewhat hard ; he has intensity and passion which sustain him at a level flight of strong and vivid poetry, but he wastes no time on ornament ; he rarely turns aside to mould a metaphor or set a quip on the plain marble of his edifice. He loves what is sombre and fatal ; he is, with the one exception of Webster, the most intellectual of the Jacobean playwrights, and his intrigues are built up on a study of moral problems. It has been pointed out

on more than one occasion, by the present writer, that in his first writings, and in particular in *The Broken Heart*, Ford reminds us less of the English school in its more coloured and glowing characteristics than of other dramatic literatures—that of Greece in the past, that of France in the immediate future.

What distinguishes Ford, then, from all other English dramatists is a severity, we may almost say a rigidity, which isolates him from Fletcher but draws him nearer to Corneille and Retrou. The tendency of the decadent English playwrights was more and more to confuse the art of the stage with the art of romance. It is interesting to perceive that Ford saw the dangers into which his elder compeers had fallen, and that he set himself to avoid some of their worst faults. He is not affected, as were so many of the comic writers; he is not bombastic, with almost all the tragedians. He has a certain grandeur of simplicity, an amplitude of design, both of them marred by an unfortunate monotony of voice. It is only in the one surviving play of his youth, *The Lover's Melancholy*, that Ford indulges in romance and melody. In his great tragedies, especially in *The Broken Heart*, his preservation of the unities, his serried action, his observance of the point of honour, his rapid and ingenious evolution, he is by far the most "classic" of our early dramatists.

Unfortunately Ford had a mania for dark and hideous ethical problems, and he liked the subjects of his plays to be morally improbable. His imagination was daring, and it sought for freshness of idea in forbidden places. He was interested in the history of those things which, as Sir Thomas Browne thought, should not remain on "any register but that of hell." It is therefore in *The Broken Heart*, where his action is not deformed by any pursuit of the impossible, that the essential sublimity of Ford's mind can be studied to the best advantage. This is the only drama of his which has been seen on the modern stage, where its high theatrical qualities have proved that Ford is one of those genuine dramatists who are read, indeed, with enjoyment in the study, but whose genuine appeal should be to the terror and pity of an audience in the theatre.

# THE BROKEN HEART.

## A Tragedy.

ACTED  
By the KINGS Majesties Seruants  
at the priuate House in the  
BLACK-FRIERS.

*Fide Henr.*



LONDON:  
Printed by J. B. for HYON BRESTON, and are to  
be sold at his Shop, neere the Colfe in  
Grave-yard. 1633

Title-page of Ford's "Broken Heart," 1633

**John Ford** (1586-1656 ?) was the second son of Thomas Ford, of Ilsington, in Devonshire, where the poet was baptized on April 17, 1586. It is believed that he matriculated, before he was fifteen, at Exeter College, Oxford, but his University life was very brief, and he was admitted to the Middle Temple in 1602. In 1606 he published two poems, entitled *Fame's Memorial* and *Honor Triumphant*. It is probable that Ford early began to write for the stage, in collaboration with Dekker, Webster, and others of his seniors. Of his early essays in this kind we possess the masque of *The Sun's Darling*, and the chronicle of *The Witch of Edmonton*, in which Ford had some share. The first play, written wholly by Ford, which we now possess is *The Lover's Melancholy* (1629). In the prologue to *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, printed in 1633, the author speaks of this play as "the firstfruits of his leisure"; he printed *The Broken Heart* and *Love's Sacrifice* in the same year, and it is natural to suppose that some event had at this time enriched him, and by enabling him to desist from his labours had turned his attention to the preservation of his writings. His historical drama of *Perkin Warbeck* belongs to the next year, 1634, and *Fancies Chaste and Noble* to 1638. His last play, *The Lady's Trial*, was published in 1639. It is believed that in that year Ford married, and retired to his paternal home, the manor-house at Ilsington, where he was born. He is said to have had children, and to have died in his Devonshire retreat towards the middle of the century.

From "THE LOVER'S MELANCHOLY"

(Contention of a Bird and a Musician)

Passing from Italy to Greece, the tales  
Which poets of an elder time have feign'd  
To glorify their Tempe, bred in me  
Desire of visiting that paradise.  
To Thessaly I came, and living private,  
Without acquaintance of more sweet companions  
Than the old inmates to my love, my thoughts,  
I day by day frequented silent groves  
And solitary walks. One morning early  
This accident encounter'd me : I heard  
The sweetest and most ravishing contention  
That art or nature ever were at strife in. . . .  
A sound of music touch'd mine ears, or rather  
Indeed entranced my soul : as I stole nearer,  
Invited by the melody, I saw  
This youth, this fair-faced youth, upon his lute  
With strains of strange variety and harmony  
Proclaiming (as it seem'd) so bold a challenge  
To the clear quiristers of the woods, the birds,  
That as they flock'd about him, all stood silent,  
Wondering at what they heard. I wonder'd too.  
. . . A nightingale,  
Nature's best skill'd musician, undertakes  
The challenge ; and, for every several strain  
The well-shaped youth could touch, she sung her own ;  
He could not run division with more art  
Upon his quaking instrument, than she  
The nightingale did with her various notes  
Reply to. . . .  
Some time thus spent, the young man grew at last



Into a pretty anger ; that a bird,  
 Whom art had never taught cliffs, moods, or notes,  
 Should vie with him for mastery, whose study  
 Had busied many hours to perfect practice :  
 To end the controversy, in a rapture  
 Upon his instrument he plays so swiftly,  
 So many voluntaries, and so quick,  
 That there was curiosity and cunning,  
 Concord in discord, lines of differing method  
 Meeting in one full centre of delight.  
 . . . The bird (ordain'd to be  
*Music's first martyr*) strove to imitate  
 These several sounds : which when her warbling throat  
 Fail'd in, for grief down dropt she on his lute  
 And brake her heart. It was the quaintest sadness,  
 To see the conqueror upon her hearse  
 To weep a funeral elegy of tears. . . .  
 He looks upon the trophies of his art,  
 Then sigh'd, then wiped his eyes, then sigh'd, and cried  
 " Alas ! poor creature, I will soon revenge  
 This cruelty upon the author of it.  
 Henceforth this lute, guilty of innocent blood,  
 Shall never more betray a harmless peace  
 To an untimely end " : and in that sorrow,  
 As he was pashing it against a tree,  
 I suddenly stept in.

At the very close of the great school which had opened with Kyd and *James Shirley* Lyly, a placid and elegant talent made its appearance, recurring without vehemence or thrill to the purely ornamental tradition of Shakespeare and Fletcher, and continuing, with a mild monotony, to repeat the commonplaces of the drama until they were hopelessly out of fashion. In the age in which JAMES SHIRLEY lived, his style was recognised as being "sweet-tempered," "discreet" and "sober," and his merits, although they are genuine, are rather of the negative order. His tragedies awaken pity more than horror ; he does not strive to freeze the blood in our veins by scenes which are disfigured with the grimace of torture nor to drive us mad by suspending us over the abysses of fear. He avoids over-emphasis, as much from exhaustion as from good taste. He professes to show us "a dead man's skull beneath the roots of flowers," that is to say, to indicate his strong situations in words which are embroidered with poetic fancy. The comedies of Shirley are polite and merry, rarely gross ; his scenic genius is persistent, but mild and apathetic. The very large body of his work, which seldom sinks below a respectable poetic level, suggests a certain degeneracy in its plenitude ; if Shirley had been richer in intellectual resource he could not have consented to proceed with so placid a uniformity. He would have been worse, that he might become better. If we allow that the great school closes with him, however, we must admit that it closes respectably. Shirley had a good notion of how to construct a play ; he was a competent craftsman ; his attitude to his art was noble ; and as a lyrical poet he had much dignity and sweetness. It was his chronological ill-fortune that he was born to illustrate a dying phase of literature.

**James Shirley** (1596-1666) was born on September 13, 1596, in the parish of St. Mary Woolchurch, in London. In 1608 he entered Merchant Taylors' School, where he did well, and remained for nearly four years. Thence he proceeded to St. John's College, Oxford, where he soon attracted the notice of Laud, then President of St. John's. His wish was to study for holy orders, but this

Laud forbade him to do, because he was disfigured by a large mole on his left cheek. Perhaps from annoyance at this exclusion, Shirley betook himself for "some precious years" to St. Catherine's Hall, Cambridge. Here in 1618 he published *Echo; or, The Unfortunate Lovers*, of which edition no copy has come down to us; it is conjectured, however, to be mainly identical with the romantic poem of *Narcissus*, which Shirley printed in 1646. He seems to have remained at Cambridge until 1623, when he was appointed Master of St. Albans Grammar School. In the meantime, in spite of Laud and the wen, he had taken orders in the English Church, accepted a living in or near St. Albans, and resigned it on joining the Church of Rome. He greatly disliked being a schoolmaster, and seems to have quitted St. Albans on the success of his earliest play, *The School of Compliment* (*Love Tricks*), in 1625. He soon took a place among the dramatists of his day which was rivalled only by Massinger. In 1631 he



**James Shirley**

*From a portrait in the 1646 edition of his "Poems"*

went to reside in Dublin, and wrote while he was there at least twelve plays, including that admirable comedy, *The Lady of Pleasure*. In 1633 his comedy of *The Young Admiral* received public and official commendation for its "beneficial and cleanly way of poetry"; Shirley was offered by the Master of the Revels as "a pattern to other poets," and *The Gamester*, when it was acted in the same year, was pronounced by the King "the best play he had seen for seven years." Shirley came back to England in 1635, but after a few months in London returned

to Ireland, where he stayed for two years. When the Rebellion broke out, Shirley was forced to leave London, but was protected by the Duke (then Earl) of Newcastle, and afterwards by the poet Thomas Stanley. He returned to London after the Restoration, but his second wife and he were driven out of their house near Fleet Street by the great fire of London. They both died of terror and exposure on the same day, in the parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, where they were buried in one grave on October 29, 1666.

From "THE SCHOOL OF COMPLIMENT"

*Infortunio.* I must have other answer, for I love you.

*Selina.* Must! but I don't see any necessity that I must love you. I do confess you are  
A proper man.

*Inf.* O, do not mock, Selina; let not excellence,  
Which you are full of, make you proud and scornful.  
I am a gentleman; though my outward part  
Cannot attract affection, yet some have told me,  
Nature hath made me what she need not shame.  
Yet look into my heart; there you shall see  
What you cannot despise, for there you are  
With all your graces waiting on you; there  
Love hath made you a throne to sit, and rule  
O'er Infortunio; all my thoughts obeying,  
And honouring you as queen. Pass by my outside,  
My breast I dare compare with any man.

*Sel.* But who can see this breast you boast of so?

*Inf.* O, 'tis an easy work; for though it be  
Not to be pierced by the dull eye, whose beam  
Is spent on outward shapes, there is a way  
To make a search into its hiddenest passage.  
I know you would not love, to please your sense.  
A tree, that bears a ragged unleaved top  
In depth of winter, may when summer comes  
Speak by his fruit he is not dead but youthful,  
Though once he show'd no sap: my heart's a plant  
Kept down by colder thoughts and doubtful fears.  
Your frowns like winter storms make it seem dead,  
But yet it is not so; make it but yours,  
And you shall see it spring, and shoot forth leaves  
Worthy your eye, and the oppressed sap

# POEMS &c.

By  
JAMES SHIRLEY.

*Sine aliquâ dementiâ nullus Phœbus.*



LONDON,

Printed for *Humphrey Moseley*, and are to be  
sold at his shop at the signe of the *Princes*  
Armes in *St. Pauls Church-yard*  
1646.

Title-page of Shirley's collected "Poems,"  
1646

Ascend to every part to make it green,  
And pay your love with fruit when harvest comes.

*Sel.* Then you confess your love is cold as yet,  
And winter's in your heart.

*Inf.* Mistake me not, Selina, for I say  
My heart is cold, not love.

*Sel.* And yet your love is from your heart, I'll warrant.

*Inf.* O, you are nimble to mistake.  
My heart is cold in your displeasures only,  
And yet my love is fervent ; for your eye,  
Casting out beams, maintains the flame it burns in.  
Again, sweet love,  
My heart is not mine own, 'tis yours, you have it.

CALCHAS' HYMN AT THE FUNERAL OF AJAX, *from* "THE  
CONTENTION OF AJAX AND ULYSSES"

The glories of our blood and state  
Are shadows, not substantial things ;  
There is no armour against fate ;  
Death lays his icy hand on kings ;  
Sceptre and Crown  
Must tumble down,  
And in the dust be equal made  
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,  
And plant fresh laurels where they kill ;  
But their strong nerves at last must yield ;  
They tame but one another still.  
Early or late,  
They stoop to fate,  
And must give up their murmuring breath  
While they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow ;  
Then boast no more your mighty deeds.  
Upon Death's purple altar now,  
See where the victor-victim bleeds.  
Your heads must come  
To the cold tomb.  
Only the actions of the just  
Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust.

*From* "THE TRAITOR"

*Sciarra.* Death's a devouring gamester,  
And sweeps up all ; —what think'st thou of an eye ?  
Couldst thou spare one, and think the blemish recompensed  
To see me safe with the other ? or a hand—  
This white hand, that hath so often  
With admiration trembled on the lute,  
Till we have pray'd thee leave the strings awhile,  
And laid our ears close to thy ivory fingers,  
Suspecting all the harmony proceeded  
From their own motion without the need  
Of any dull or passive instrument ? —  
No, Amidea ; thou shalt not bear one scar,  
To buy my life ; the sickle shall not touch  
A flower, that grows so fair upon his stalk. . . .

Thy other hand will miss a white companion,  
And wither on thy arm. What then can I  
Expect from thee to save me? I would live  
And owe my life to thee, so 'twere not bought  
Too dear.

The declining art of drama suffered an abrupt and complete extinction at the breaking out of the Civil War. In March 1639, Davenant had had letters patent granted him for building a new theatre, but the site chosen was not found convenient, and he resigned his right. Sir Henry Herbert was still licensing plays early in 1642. Shirley's *Sisters* passed him in April of that year. In June he licensed a "new play called *The Irish Rebellion*," now not known to exist, and he noted "Here ended my allowance of plays, for the war began in August 1642." In September 1642, the Houses of Parliament published an ordinance that "whereas public sports do not well agree with public calamities, nor public stage-plays with the seasons of humiliation," all performances of the drama should cease. The law was carried out with great severity, and in February 1648 it was further enacted that all theatres should be dismantled, and all actors of plays, even in private, publicly whipped, the audiences being individually fined. This was actually carried out, for while some unfortunate players were giving a performance of Fletcher's *Bloody Brother*, a party of soldiers burst in and carried them off to punishment. It was not until May 1656, and then with great timidity and vigilance, that Davenant, who had been the last adventurer of the old school, came forward as the pioneer of the new, with an operatic entertainment at Rutland House, and drama arose again in England after a complete eclipse of fifteen years. *The Drama extinguished*



## CHAPTER IX

### JACOBEOAN PROSE

WHILE the condition of poetry and drama in the age which we are now considering was in a very high degree satisfactory and healthy, that of prose was singularly the reverse. The reign of James I. is one of the most discouraging in our history so far as the advance of prose style is concerned. Two English works of great importance, *The Advancement of Learning*, in 1605, and *The History of the World*, in 1614, have been described in an earlier chapter, for they belong to the maturity of those characteristically Elizabethan authors, Bacon and Raleigh. The English *Bible*, in its final form, is the glory of James I., but in like manner it has been discussed on previous pages, as representing, in its essential character, the revised and completed labours of many sixteenth-century divines from Tyndale and Coverdale down to Parker and his bishops. The *Bible* belongs in its glory to no one man or set of men; it grew, in the eighty years of its evolution, like a cathedral. When these features, at all events, are removed from our field of vision, we are struck by the poverty of what remains. The reign of James I. was a period of verse; it was not a period of prose; and we do not discover one other masterpiece to chronicle.

In the ordinary Jacobean prose which we have now to examine we observe a very singular lack of the qualities which belong to growth and encourage to hope. In the very days of Shakespeare, prose, without having reached maturity, is already in decay. The current divinity and history and romance of the early seventeenth century are on the downward, not the upward grade. The mass of them is ponderous, involved, pedantic in a degree not found in the imperfect but vigorous prose-writers of the sixteenth century. If we compare, in the matter of style, Samuel Purchas with Hakluyt, or Morton with Hooker, the decline in lucidity and strength is very remarkable. The whole manner has become complicated and loquacious, with a certain softness which is absolutely decadent. But the parlous state into which English prose was falling is still more surely and more instructively seen by a comparison of it with contemporary French prose. In the mere construction and arrangement of sentences, for instance, it is instructive to compare a page of one of Donne's sermons—and we have nothing better to produce of its kind—with one of Donne's immediate contemporary, St. Francis de Sales. The comparison is between a spirited barbarian and a finished man of the world.

It may be said, however, that the literature of England had for centuries been at least fifty years behind that of France, and that English prose of the

early seventeenth century ought to be weighed against French prose of the middle of the sixteenth. But in that case the advantage is none the less on the side of France. It is not that England did not happen to produce a Rabelais or a Montaigne, because the styles of these men were so extremely personal that they may not have had a direct influence on the national manner of expression. But what was missing in English prose were the formative forces applied by great authors who were a little less individual than Montaigne and Rabelais. For instance, Calvin used the French language with such concise severity, such bitter power, that every Frenchman who read his trenchant sentences instinctively tried to emulate his vigour; while, on the other hand, the sweetness and lightness of Amyot not merely fascinated his readers by their grace, but stimulated them to be graceful themselves. In England we had no one who in any measure acted upon our style as Calvin did on the French; while in place of Amyot, with his pure simplicity, we have to point to Lyly, with his affected amenities and his perilous balance of sentences. Here, indeed, there was stimulus and an encouragement to imitation, but of the most unwholesome kind, so that in fact, while acknowledging the merits of Lyly, we must charge his Euphuism with not a little of the decadence of Jacobean prose, since what he led his unfortunate disciples to do was to strain for delicate effects upon an instrument which was simply out of tune.

It is perhaps not surprising that history did not flourish in England at the beginning of the seventeenth century, for it merely underwent the depression which affected this branch of literature throughout Europe. But the difference between us and our neighbours was that they had enjoyed, at the close of the Middle Ages, valuable schools of history. In Commynes, particularly, France had possessed a great chronicling statesman, a man who could at once be with those who were moving about the centre of affairs and observe the movements in the spirit of a philosopher. With all the romantic charm of Raleigh, he makes no pretension to be a psychologist; he is scarcely curious as to the reasons which guide men to their actions. The French historians of the sixteenth century had in no single case equalled Commynes in genius, but they had followed him with careful enthusiasm. He was their model, and we in England had no great man to follow. Even the impassioned patriotism of the best Frenchmen, although not less felt on our side of the Channel, received far poorer expression, from the lack of skill and practice which our orators enjoyed. *The historians*

The style of the lesser English historians was artless and casual, and Sir JOHN HAYWARD took credit to himself for giving it a classical turn. Sir Henry Craik, who has recently drawn attention to his writings, holds that Heyward was justified in his self-gratulation, and that his books "mark a distinct step forward in the historical style." He attempted to improve upon the old humdrum chroniclers by arranging his events rhetorically, in the manner of Livy, whom he followed in putting dramatic speeches into the mouths of his prominent personages. This had been done by Machiavelli

and others, and although it is contrary to modern scientific methods, it was not unfavourable to the literary form of history. A humbler writer was the industrious John Speed (see p. 80), who laboured under the disadvantage of a lack of education. He was a great collector and compiler, and before he essayed his own *History of Great Britain*, Speed not merely spent years in making himself acquainted with what had been gathered together by his predecessors, but he called in other and more learned men than himself to help him. Among these the most eminent was "that worthy repairer of eating Time's ruins," Sir Robert

Cotton (see p. 80), who revised, corrected and polished the whole work before Speed ventured upon issuing it. Cotton was the leading antiquary of the age, and his "cabinets were unlocked, and his library continually set open to the free access" of Speed and of his army of assistants. These men had much in common with the restless city chronicler of a previous generation, John Stow. Like him, they thought mainly of collecting and arranging. The accuracy of the documents affected them little, and their philosophical import not at all, but they amassed material with the energy of the coral insect. While we mention their modest services, we should not forget those of Sir HENRY SPELMAN, who had something of the spirit of Stubbs and Freeman, since he would not adopt the rhetorical paraphrases at that time fashionable, but in compiling the civil affairs of



Sir John Hayward

*From the scarce engraved portrait by Crispin de Passe*

the country down to Magna Charta, whenever he could do so printed them in the exact words of his authorities. But the excellent Spelman is hardly to be included among writers of English prose.

**Sir John Hayward** (1564-1627) was born at Felixstowe about 1564, and was educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge. His *First Year of Henry II.* appeared in 1599, with a dedication to Essex in such glowing terms that Queen Elizabeth ordered Bacon to examine the book for treason. The reply was that the Queen need not "rack his person," but his style, as he had committed no treason, but a great deal of felony by his plagiarisms. James I. liked Hayward, and patronised his various publications, knighting him in 1619; and he acted as a sort of historiographer to the unfortunate Prince Henry. Hayward worked with Camden at Chelsea College. **Sir Henry Spelman** (1564-1641), a lifelong friend and associate of each of the preceding historians, was born at

Congham, near Lynn Regis. He was an Anglo-Saxon scholar who mainly composed his archæological and historical works in Latin, but his *Life of King Alfred the Great*, which remained in MS. until Hearne published it in 1709, was composed in English. Spelman was a scholar of prodigious energy and perseverance, and filled vast storehouses with information which later investigators have referred to at their ease. The relation of each of the writers mentioned in this chapter to the illustrious Camden, who was their intellectual father, must not be overlooked.

The writers who have just been mentioned were contented to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for those who came after them, but RICHARD KNOLLES seems to have been ambitious to achieve fame in his own person as a picturesque writer. If this was his aim, we have to admit that to a partial and fitful degree he succeeded in attaining it. His one book was still widely read long after its author passed away, and has met with admirers among the most punctilious of modern critics. Dr. Johnson had an extraordinary enthusiasm for Knolles, whom he considered, as a writer, the greatest among British historians. He said that "his style, though sometimes vitiated by false wit, is pure, nervous, elevated and clear." Hallam, Southey and Coleridge were also admirers of Knolles, and Byron attributed to the reading of *The History of the*



Chelsea College

From Grose's "Military Antiquities," 1788

*Turks* in childhood "the oriental colouring which is observed in my poetry." It must be confessed that Knolles' huge folio, adorned with plates of all the Sultans, real and fabulous, has ceased to attract readers. The subject, so keenly interesting to Jacobean readers, has become hopelessly remote to us. To enjoy the rolling sentences and haughty rhetoric of *The History of the Turks* we must throw ourselves back to the leisurely times in which it was composed. Still Knolles is as likely as any Jacobean prose writer extant to enjoy one of those sudden revivals of literary reputation which occur from time to time. At present his fame, if not precisely extinct, is certainly dormant, and we cannot any longer see the flamboyant Amuraths and Mustaphas as they were seen by the simple, single-minded and romantic old dominie of Sandwich.

**Richard Knolles** (1548 ? -1610) was born at Cold Ashby, in Northamptonshire, and educated at Lincoln College, Oxford, of which he was made a fellow in 1570. He was poor, and his abilities attracted the notice of a prominent Kentish lawyer, Sir Roger Marwood, who made Knolles master of the Grammar School of

Sandwich. In this little town he resided for the remainder of his life. It appears that Knolles had always been fascinated by Turkish history, but soon after 1590 he settled down to the composition of a great work on the subject. While he was preparing, in 1598, the French antiquary, J. J. Boissard, published a Latin *Lives of the Sultans* at Frankfort; this greatly encouraged Knolles, who, to tell the truth, did not scruple to poach systematically on Boissard's preserves. In 1603 Knolles published his *General History of the Turks*. He continued to enlarge it, and after his death it was further revised by other hands. Knolles was buried at Sandwich on July 2, 1610.

*Theology*



Sir Henry Spelman  
From an old engraving

The question of the toleration of religious dissent, and of Church discipline generally, produced an enormous amount of printed matter to very little of which the word "literature" can any longer, even by indulgence, be applied. Many years ago, Mr. Swinburne, commenting on the romantic interest, literary and linguistic, which attaches to all Elizabethan and Jacobean writings, suggested that sooner or later every book of that period might be reprinted with some profit,—except, of course, the divinity. This exception on the part of a scholar so enthusiastically devoted to the Jacobean genius exemplifies the worthlessness of the body of controversial theology. Our language produced under Elizabeth and under James I. two theologians of genius—Hooker and Donne respectively, one in each

generation. If we remove these two, the residue is seen to be poor indeed. As to the spirit of it, factious, intolerant and rude, we have only to study Bacon's *Pacification and Edification of the Church of England* to learn how its strident notes jarred on the ear of that urbane philosopher. It was perceived quite early in the seventeenth century by perspicuous statesmen, that the English Church had to deal with two very dangerous and insidious enemies, foes whose peril was greater in that they were of her own household. These were Catholicism on the one hand and Puritanism on the other. Almost on James I.'s arrival in London the Millenary Petition showed him what a profound interest all classes of his subjects took in ceremonial legislation, and this was a theme about which the author of the *Basilicon Doron* of 1599 was as eager as the keenest of them.

The importance of all these enactments and solutions was immense; but the literature which prepared the way for and accompanied them was, as a



rule, poor indeed. Most of the theological books of this period read like so many notes in a diary. They are strings of detached observations, or more commonly citations, to be used in court by an advocate. They are full of illustrations and parallels; the juridical entirely excludes the imaginative or even the rhetorical order of ideas. Nothing could exceed the dreariness, the ineffectual dulness of the writings of most of James I.'s leading bishops. RICHARD MONTAGU (1577-1641), who became Bishop of Chichester, was an extremely effective controversialist in the taste of the day, and in that defence of his own High Church views and of the King's policy, which he published in *Appello Casarem* in 1625, he produced the most famous pamphlet of the day. But Montagu is now absolutely unreadable. The King greatly admired the pamphlets and treatises of Andrewes, largely, no doubt, because that prelate, in his Latin discourses, gave himself some breadth of movement and aimed at a certain literary effect; but these writings have no place in English literary history. Nothing displays the poverty of English theological literature at the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, so violently as to compare it with what was best in contemporary France, with the imaginative freshness and fulness, the broad rich wave of metaphor and illustration, which poured from the pulpit of St. Francis de Sales.

In turning sadly back to the poverty of English theology, with its ostentatious



Title-page of "The History of the Turks," 1603

tion of patristic learning, its lumbering gait, its undignified scrappiness, we see the ill effect of the moral passions of the moment. It was an age of controversy, and wrangling discussion is not good for prose. Moreover, a taste for mere casuistry was greatly encouraged by James I. We are told that "the King longed to discourse with a man who had dedicated his studies to that useful part of learning," and ROBERT SANDERSON (1587-1663), Bishop of Lincoln, owed his promotion to the reputation he enjoyed for his skill in chopping straws of dogma. This admirable man, who grew in his old age to be the most dignified figure in the English Church, is an instance of the divorce between theology and literature. His popularity as a writer was immense; of his *Lectures* of 1615 there were sold 10,000 copies. His philosophical disquisitions gave him high authority. But to read the dense and ponderous volumes of Sanderson would nowadays be a task which even an ecclesiastical historian might shrink from. Among the pure casuists, JOSEPH HALL was the most agreeable writer, and his ingenious, fluent and sophistical meditations may still be examined with pleasure. JAMES USSHER (1581-1656), the famous Archbishop of Armagh, is all coagulated learning. WILLIAM PERKINS (1558-1602), in whom the seventeenth century proclaimed an English Calvin, was highly popular as an awakener of the Puritan conscience, and possessed high pretensions as a writer, but his salt has lost its savour. Of lesser theologians it would certainly be out of place to speak in this purely literary compendium.

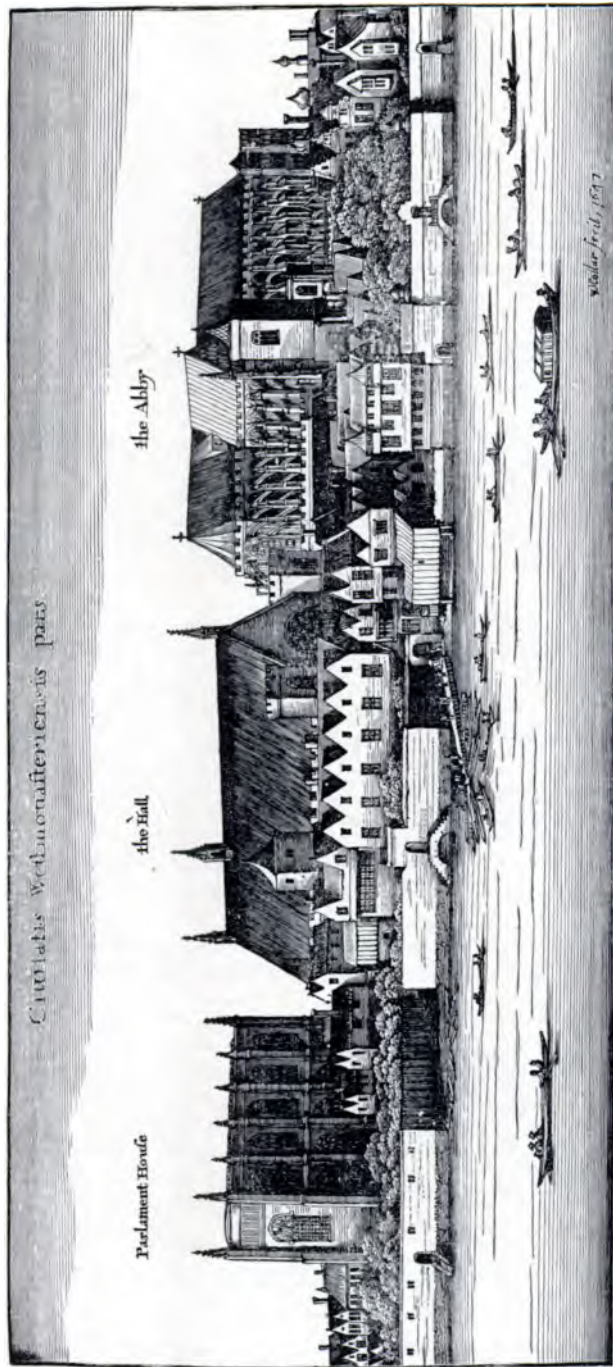
It is in the pulpit effusions of the Jacobean theologians that we find what is most encouraging to a student of literature. It was the practice to recite a discourse which had been prepared before, and which, if possible, was learned by heart. In many cases it was written down as an aid to memory, and locked away for future use; this is how the posthumous sermons of Donne and Andrewes have been preserved for us. Sanderson, whose memory was painfully infirm, was the earliest preacher who read his discourse from the pulpit. Until his day something of the miraculous prestige of heaven-descended oratory was sought to be preserved by the most famous divines. The *Sermons* of the angelical LANCELOT ANDREWES, "the star of preachers," display to us the qualities which were most enthusiastically welcomed from the pulpit in the days of James I. The oddity of phraseology, the affectations, quips and pranks of style, are so extraordinary in the surviving English writings of Andrewes that it is difficult to realise that they were once considered exemplary and found impressive. In his own age, the strange gymnastics of the bishop's language were not unobserved, but were the objects of adoring emulation. His fellow-translator on the *Authorised Version*, NICHOLAS FELTON, Bishop of Ely (1556-1626), admits that he tried hard to write like Andrewes, "and had almost marred my own natural trot by endeavouring to imitate his artificial amble." It was said, in a less eulogistic spirit, that Andrewes had "reduced preaching to punning." There must have been something radically wrong in the taste of an age which persuaded the most saintly of its prelates, a man of the purest and noblest character, to indulge

in such linguistical buffooneries as deface the *Sermons* of Lancelot Andrewes. But it must not be forgotten that he looked upon Latin as the vehicle of his serious and important declarations, and that his sermons, in which in lighter mood he sported indulgently with his courtly audiences, were not prepared by himself for publication. In that vast labour for the Church of England, in which Andrewes stood forth as *incomparabile propugnaculum*—an incomparable bulwark—his English writings took a negligible place.

**Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626)**

(see p. 101) was born at Allhallows, Barking, in 1555. He was an excellent scholar at Merchant Tailors' School, and gained a fellowship at Pembroke College, Cambridge. When Jesus College, Oxford, was founded, young Andrewes was invited to be one of its

foundation fellows, and in 1580 he took holy orders. He was a great favourite with Queen Elizabeth, who appointed him one of her chaplains and Dean of Westminster. At the accession of James I. Andrewes rose higher still in Court favour, and was made Bishop of Chichester in 1605, and had promotions showered upon him.



**Westminster in the Seventeenth Century**

*From a print by Hollar, 1647*

Andrewes became successively Bishop of Ely and of Winchester. He headed the list of authorised translators of the Bible in 1611. Fuller tells us that James I. had so great an awe and veneration for Andrewes that, in the bishop's presence, he refrained from that uncouth and unsavoury jesting in which he was accustomed to indulge at other times. This admirable prelate, "an infinite treasure, an amazing oracle," died at Winchester House, Southwark, on September 25, 1626. His English *Sermons*, at the particular desire of Charles I., were collected by Laud and Buckeridge, and ninety-six of them were published in 1628. In his lifetime there had only appeared a little volume of sermons on the Lord's Prayer, entitled *Scala Cæli*, in 1611.

One fault is certainly lacking to the sermons of Lancelot Andrewes: they are not pompous. They are, on the contrary, highly colloquial, and they have come down to us exactly as they must have been spoken, less "touched up" for the press than any other theological writings of the time. A perfectly fair example of them,—at their best indeed,—may be quoted from that *Of the Sending of the Holy Ghost*, preached on Whitsunday, 1617:

How comes the heart broken? The common hammer that breaks them [*sic*] is some bodily or worldly cross, such as we commonly call heart-breakings. There be here in the text [Luke iv. 18, 19] three strokes of this hammer, able I think to break any heart in the world.

Captivity. They be captives first; and "captives" and "caitiffs," in our speech, sound much like one. It is sure a condition able to make any man hang up his harp, and sit weeping by the waters of Babylon. There is one stroke.

Then follows another, worse yet. For, in Babylon, though they were captives, yet went they abroad, had their liberty. These here are in prison; and in some blind hole there, as it might be in the dungeon, where they see nothing. That, I take it, is meant by "blind" here in the text; blind for want of light, not for want of sight, though these two both come to one, are convertible. They that are blind, say they are dark; and they that be in the dark, for the time are deprived of sight, have no manner use of it at all, no more than a blind man. Now they that row in the galeys, yet this comfort they have, they see the light; and if a man see nothing else, the light is comfortable. And a great stroke of the hammer it is, not to have so much als that poor comfort left them.

But yet are we not at the worst. One stroke more. For one may be in the dungeon and yet have his limbs at large, his hands and feet at liberty. But so have not those in the text, but are in irons; and those so heavy and pinching, as they are even *τεθραυσμένοι*, "bruised," and hurt with them. See now their case. Captives; and not only that, but in prison. In prison; not above, but in the dungeon, the deepest, darkest, blindest hole there; no light, no sight at all. And in the hole, with as many irons upon them, that they are even bruised and sore with them. And tell me now, if these three together be not enough to break Manasses', or any man's heart, and to make him have *cor contritum* indeed?

The familiarities of the Jacobean sermon were, however, intentional. We are told of Andrewes himself, by his editor, John Buckeridge (1562-1631), Bishop of Ely, that "he was always a diligent and painful preacher," and that his addresses "were thrice revised before they were preached." In Buckeridge, himself a prominent sermon-writer, we find exactly the same peculiarities of style, a mixture of quibbling Euphuism and prosaic homeliness dashed with incessant quotation of Latin; and these may be taken to represent what



was most commonly aimed at in pulpit oratory throughout the reign of James I.

The question of the toleration of religious nonconformity was one which steadily occupied the thoughts of King James, and led to the production of an extraordinary amount of writing. Most of this was wholly ephemeral in form as in matter, but James employed in his controversies the ablest minds which he could command. Andrewes was one of those who defended the King against Bellarmine and his other opponents on the continent of Europe whom his views on episcopacy and allegiance had stung into fury; but the controversial pamphlets of Andrewes were in Latin. Among those who warred with Rome in a ceaseless flow of English "apologies" and "incounters" and "defences" and "replies" none was more active and none quite so vigorous as, in his youth, THOMAS MORTON, afterwards Bishop of Durham. The tracts poured forth by his indefatigable zeal against his Romish adversaries have the faults of the age, but occasionally overcome them, and when Morton is really angry, he writes directly to the point. In such sentences as the following there is wonderfully little of the prevailing languor of prose style :



**Thomas Morton**

*After an engraving by William Faithorne*

If I had not believed upon sufficient evidence that the succession of Bishops in the Church of England had been legally derived from the Apostles, I had never entered into that high calling, much less continued in it thus long. And therefore I must here expressly vindicate myself from a most notorious untruth which is cast upon me by a late Romish writer, that I should, publicly, in the House of Peers, the beginning of the last Parliament, assent to that abominable fiction which some Romanists have devised concerning the consecrating Matthew Parker at the Nag's Head Tavern to be Archbishop of Canterbury. For I do here solemnly profess I have always believed that fable to proceed from the Father of Lies, as the public records still extant do evidently testify. Nor do I remember that ever I heard it mentioned in that or in any other parliament that ever I sate in. As for our brethren, the Protestants of foreign reformed churches, the most learned and judicious of themselves have bewailed their misery for want of Bishops. And therefore God forbid I should be so uncharitable as to censure them for no-churches, for that which is their infelicity, not their fault. But as for our perverse Protestants at home, I cannot say the same of them, seeing they impiously reject that which the others piously desire.

**Thomas Morton** (1564–1659) was the son of a mercer at York, where he was born on March 20, 1564. He was sent to St. John's College, Cambridge, where



he was carefully trained in theology under the Puritan divine, William Whitaker (1548-1595). Morton, however, abandoned the Calvinist section of the Church, becoming more and more strongly opposed to dissent. His literary career began rather late, his earliest work, the *Apologia Catholica*, being published in 1605, but Morton was immediately drawn into controversy, and his writings were extremely numerous. The most effective of them was *The Catholic Appeal* of 1609, which was extremely popular and was considered to be "a final and deadly blow to Rome." Morton was successively Bishop of Chester, Lichfield, and

Durham, and suffered greatly at the overthrow of episcopacy; surviving, however, until his ninety-sixth year. He died at Easton-Mauduit on September 22, 1659. **George Hakewill** (1578-1649) is little known, but continues to have a few ardent admirers. He was rector of Heanton Punchardon all through the Civil War, and he published two very remarkable volumes, *The Vanity of the Eye* (1612) and *An Apology of the Power of God* (1627). To his beneficence in 1624 Exeter College, Oxford, owes its chapel, as a recent inscription testifies. The style of Hakewill had the honour to influence Milton and Samuel Johnson.

One of those learned young men whom Morton employed to collect material for his controversial writings against the Romanists was one who had himself been brought up in the Roman Church, the poet JOHN DONNE (p. 292). He now attracts our attention as incomparably the greatest religious orator



John Donne

Portrait of Donne in his winding-sheet

From "Death's Duel," 1630

of the age, the finest theological writer between Hooker and Jeremy Taylor, and perhaps the most ornate and stately composer of English prose in the Jacobean period. He is at the head of the divines who with more or less ingenuity and fervour were pouring forth from their pulpits those strange disquieting sermons which at once disturbed and overawed their audiences. The qualities which mark the astonishing poems of Donne, their occasional majesty, their tossing and foaming imagination, their lapses into bad taste and unintelligibility, the sinister impression of a strange perversity of passion carefully suppressed in them,—all these, though to a less marked degree, distinguish the prose of Donne. Its beauties are of the savage order, and they display not only no consciousness of any rules which govern prose composition, but none of that chastening of rhetoric which had been achieved under Elizabeth by Hooker. Such books of Donne's as his paradox of suicide, the *Biathanatos*, and



JOHN DONNE.  
 ENGRAVED BY W. MARSHALL, AFTER A PORTRAIT PAINTED IN 1591.

hour and but an hour," Brathwayte tells us. Andrewes died in 1626, the year that Donne began to preach at St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, and the celebrity of Donne soon surpassed that of his most renowned predecessor. Age added splendour to the voice of the fiery and yet sombre Dean of St. Paul's. His hearers, borne along upon the flow of his sinuous melody, now soft and winning, now vehement in storm, now piercing like a clarion, now rolling in the meditative music of an organ, felt themselves lifted up to heaven itself. In the early days of Charles I. a sermon delivered by Dean Donne was the most brilliant public entertainment which London had to offer. One of the most magnificently sustained pieces of religious composition in English literature

is the *Second Prebend Sermon*, a long poem of victory over death, which he winds up in this imperial peroration :



**Bishop Hall**

*From an engraving of the picture in  
Emmanuel College, Cambridge*

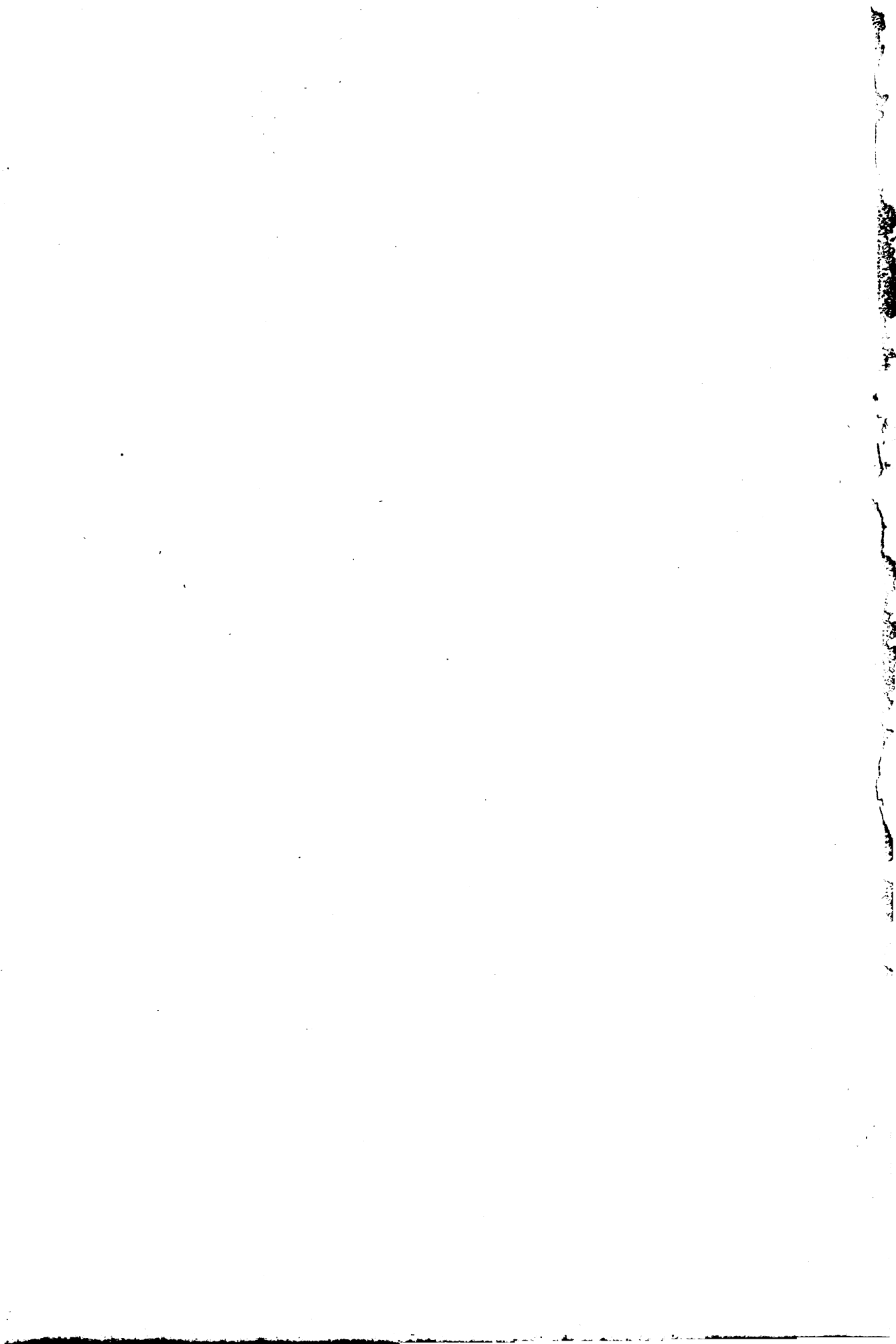
As my soul shall not go towards heaven, but go by heaven to heaven, to the heaven of heavens, so the true joy of a good soul in this world is the very joy of heaven ; and we go hither, not that being without joy, we might have joy infused into us, but that, as Christ says, *Our joy might be full*, perfected, sealed with an everlastingness ; for, as He promises, *That no man shall take our joy from us*, so neither shall death itself take it away, nor so much as interrupt it, or discontinue it, but as in the face of death, when he lays hold upon me, and in the face of the devil, when he attempts me, I shall see the face of God (for everything shall be a glass, to reflect God upon me), so in the agonies of death, in the anguish of that dissolution, in the sorrows of that valediction, in the irreversibleness of that transmigration, I shall have a joy, which shall no more evaporate, than my soul shall evaporate, a joy, that shall pass up, and put on a more glorious garment above, and be joy superinvested in glory.

The student may with advantage compare the structure of this sentence with that of some of De Quincey's most studied and rolling paragraphs. Less frequent in Donne, but not less welcome when they come, are his descents to the familiar and the confidential. In the *Funeral Sermon for Sir William Cockayne* he tells us how difficult he found it to concentrate his thoughts in pure devotion :

I throw myself down in my chamber, and I call in and invite God and his angels thither ; and when they are there, I neglect God and His angels for the noise of a fly, for the rattling of a coach, for the whining of a door ; I talk on, in the same posture of prayer ; eyes lifted up, knees bowed down, as though I prayed to God ; and if God should ask me when I thought last of God in that prayer I cannot tell : sometimes I find that I forgot what I was about, but when I began to forget it, I cannot tell. A memory of yesterday's pleasures, a fear of to-morrow's dangers, a straw under my knee, a noise in mine ear, a chimera in my brain, troubles me in my prayer.



JOHN DONNE.  
 ENGRAVED BY W. MARSHALL, AFTER A PORTRAIT PAINTED IN 1591.





his fantastic romance, a diatribe against the Jesuits, called *Ignatius his Conclave*, unquestionably exhibit sympathy with what was morbid in the temper of the time. They are to theology what the tragedies of Ford are to drama.

But when we turn to the *Sermons* of Donne we rise to a much higher plane. Walton, who heard many of these discourses delivered, has left us a wonderful description of their author in the majesty of his prestige at St. Paul's :

Preaching the Word so as showed his own heart was possessed with those very thoughts and joys that he laboured to distil into others : a preacher in earnest ; weeping sometimes for his auditory, sometimes with them ; always preaching to himself, like an angel from a cloud, but in none ; carrying some, as St. Paul was, to heaven in holy raptures, and enticing others by a sacred art and courtship to amend their lives : here picturing a vice so as to make it ugly to those that practised it, and a virtue so as to make it beloved even by those that loved it not ; and all this with a most particular grace and an inexpressible addition of comeliness.

I am glad to Royston, and I make account  
that his note may receive the booke thy,  
Euenings. So that y<sup>e</sup> may at y<sup>e</sup> first by  
your deliver thy booke to my L. to who I be  
speak y<sup>e</sup> to recommend me next humble ser  
vies.

Y<sup>e</sup> ever to be  
commended

24 Jan.

Donne

Letter from Donne to Sir Robert Cotton

There is a doubt as to the degree in which these magnificent sermons were orally delivered. The preacher certainly held no manuscript before him, while yet the effort of retaining in the memory such a rich coil of interminably complicated sentences is hardly credible. It seems probable that the sermon was carefully composed and written, as we now possess it, but that the preacher merely spoke a discourse on the same lines which he kept as close to his original as he could. His rule was to preach for exactly sixty minutes ; he had " his

It is proper to point out that the extremely popular Theophrastian *Characters*, which were published in his name, were "written by himself and other learned gentlemen his friends." The following, whether written by Overbury or one of his companions, offers a favourable example of this popular kind of writing :

#### A FAIR AND HAPPY MILKMAID

Is a country wench, which is so far from making herself beautiful by art, that



The Countess of Somerset

one look of hers is able to put all face-physic out of countenance. She knows a fair look is but a dumb orator to commend virtue, therefore minds it not. All her excellencies stand in her so silently, as if they had stolen upon her without her knowledge. The lining of her apparel (which is her self) is far better than outsides of tissue ; for though she be not arrayed in the spoil of the silk-worm, she is decked in innocence, a far better wearing. She doth not, with lying long abed, spoil both her complexion and conditions ; nature hath taught her, too immoderate sleep is rust to the soul : she rises therefore with chanticleer, her dame's cock, and at night makes the lamb her curfew. In milking a cow, and straining the teats through her fingers, it seems that so sweet a milk-press makes the milk the whiter or sweeter ; for never came almond glove or aromatic ointment on her

palm to taint it. The golden ears of corn fall and kiss her feet when she reaps them, as if they wished to be bound and led prisoners by the same hand that felled them. Her breath is her own, which scents all the year long of June, like a new-made hay-cock. She makes her hand hard with labour, and her heart soft with pity : and when winter evenings fall early (sitting at her merry wheel) she sings a defiance to the giddy wheel of fortune. She doth all things with so sweet a grace, it seems ignorance will not suffer her to do ill, being her mind is to do well. She bestows her year's wages at next fair ; and in choosing her garments, counts no bravery in the world, like decency. The garden and bee-hive are all her physick and surgery, and she lives the longer for it. She dares go alone and unfold sheep in the night, and fears no manner of ill, because she means none ; yet to say truth, she is never alone, for she is still accompanied with old songs, honest thoughts, and prayers, but short ones ; yet they have their efficacy, in that they are not painted with ensuing idle cogitations. Lastly, her dreams are so chaste, that she dare tell them ; only a Friday's dream is all her superstition : that she conceals for fear of anger. Thus lives she, and all her care is she may die in the springtime, to have store of flowers stuck upon her winding-sheet.

With the Theophrastian character-study is closely connected a class of

Jacobean literature which preceded and then accompanied it, the sociological and satirical pamphlets of which the most popular were written by THOMAS DEKKER and SAMUEL ROWLANDS. These writers deliberately addressed the reader who wished to be amused and startled, not the student who desired mental improvement. When we, after nearly three hundred years have elapsed, are brought face to face with their amazing pictures of social life, and ask ourselves, Can such things have been? we need to be reminded that a pamphleteer like Dekker was not a statistician or a social reformer, but a caterer for public amusement. It was necessary to rouse his public, and this he had to do by preposterously overcharging his picture. His interiors, his sketches of low life in great towns, his revelations of "conny-catching," "gulling" and horse-coping, are intended to amuse; at every point Dekker more or less consciously exaggerates the words and the things he enumerates. He is not writing as a psychologist or as an historian; he is making a living by writing down, with more or less scrupulous art, what will astonish us and awaken our attention. In the pursuit of this picturesque sensationalism he is often very successful; *Lanthorn and Candlelight* and *The Gull's Hornbook* are among the liveliest productions of the Jacobean age. But they should not be taken too seriously as realistic delineations of life in London. Dekker descends in the natural order from Lyly, Greene and Nash, and he may be taken as a link in the ultimate evolution of the English novel of character. Of his work as a playwright we have already spoken (p. 331).

Of **Thomas Dekker** very little is known apart from his voluminous authorship. He was probably of Dutch extraction, and was certainly born in London, perhaps about 1570. As early as 1597 he was known as a dramatist, and there are entries in Henslowe's *Diary* of many lost plays in which he was engaged. He was a merchant-tailor, an industrious literary hack, and extremely poor. Beyond this we have only to record that from 1613 to 1620 he seems to have been in prison, "the bed in which seven years I lay dreaming." Among the best plays of Dekker

A True and Historical

# RELATION

Of the Poysoning of  
*Sir Thomas Overbury.*

With the  
Severall Arraignments and Speeches  
of those that were executed  
thereupon.

Also, all the passages concerning the  
Divorce between ROBERT late Earle  
of Essex, and the Lady FRANCES  
HOWARD: with King JAMES's and  
other large Speeches.

Collected out of the Papers of Sir Francis  
Bacon, the Kings Attorney-  
Generall.

---

LONDON,

Printed by T. M. & A. C. for John Benson  
and John Playford, and are sold at their  
Shops in S. Dunstons Church-yard, and  
in the Middle Temple.  
1651.

Title-page of one of the pamphlets relating to the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury

are *Old Fortunatus*, *The Honest Whore*, *Satiromastix*, and *The Virgin Martyr*, in the last of which he collaborated with Massinger. Of his very numerous prose treatises, the best known are *The Bachelor's Banquet* (1603), *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* (1606), *News from Hell* (1606), *Lanthorn and Candlelight* (1608), and *The Gull's Hornbook* (1609). In his old age Dekker wrote with Ford and Rowley; he disappears after 1640. **Samuel Rowlands** was a similar pamphleteer, who wrote *Hell's Broke Loose* (1606), *The Melancholy Knight* (1619), and a vast number of similar works of entertain-

ment, but who is not known to have contributed to the stage. The following passage, from the *Jests to Make You Merry*, of 1607, displays Dekker in his more sententious mood :

O sacred liberty, with how little devotion do men come into thy temples when they cannot bestow upon thee too much honour ! Thy embraces are more delicate than those of a young bride with her lover, and to be divorced from them is half to be damned. For what else is a prison but the very next door to Hell ? It is a man's grave, in which he walks alive. It is a sea, where he is always shipwrecked. It is a lodging built out of the world. It is a wilderness where all that wander up and down grow wild, and all that come into it are devoured. It is an unsatiable gulf, a fathomless whirlpool, an everlasting scaffold on which men go daily to execution. It is the cave where horror dwells ; it is a bed of

## Dekker his Dreame.

In which, beeing rapt with a Poeticall  
*Entbusiasme*, the great *Volumes of Heauen*  
and *Hell* to Him were opened, in which he  
*read many Wonderfull Things.*

*Est Deme in Nobis, agitante calcfimus illo.*



LONDON,  
Printed by NICHOLAS ORES. 1620.

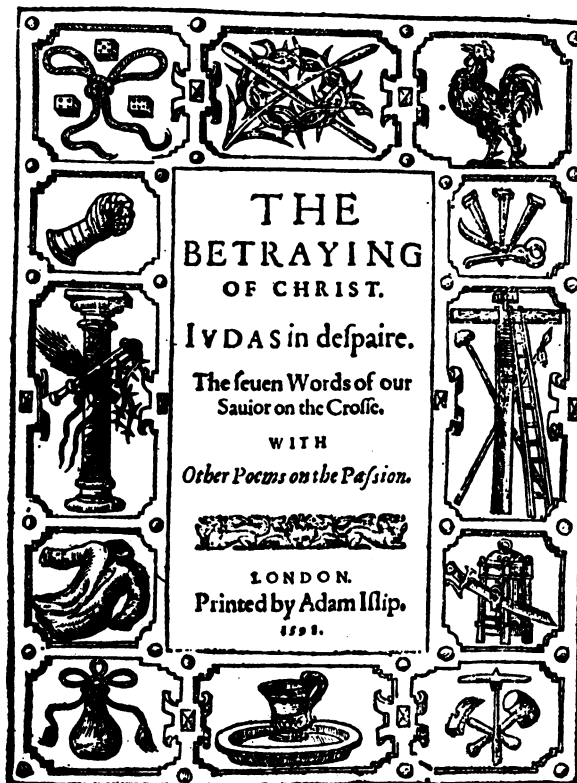
Title-page of Dekker's "Dreams," 1620

terror. No ! no ! It stands not next door to Hell, but it is Hell itself, for souls lie languishing and cannot die. The keepers of it are churlish, and so are devils ; the officers of it tormentors, and what are torments ? Goeth not a man therefore toward Hell when he is led to prison ? For, alack ! what are the comforts he meets there ? His wife and children grieve him when he beholds them ; his kinsfolk grow blind and cannot see him ; his friends are stricken deaf and cannot hear his moans. They upon whose company he spent his coin and credit will not come near the sight of that cold harbour where he lies.

Miscellaneous  
writers

Of other miscellaneous writers of the Jacobean age we have not space to say much. Sir HENRY WOTTON and JOHN HALES were not professional

**Sir Henry Wotton** (1568-1639) was born on April 9, 1568, at Boughton Hall, in Kent. After being carefully educated at Winchester and Oxford, he devoted himself to the diplomatic career, settling ultimately in Venice as ambassador. On his retirement from the foreign service, in 1623, Wotton was made Provost of Eton College, and lived there until his death at the close of 1639. His *Life* was written by Izaak Walton. The "ever-memorable" **John Hales** (1584-1656) was born at Bath and educated at Oxford. He entered holy orders, and in 1613 was admitted a fellow of Eton College, being ejected and reduced to destitution in 1649. Hales died in great poverty on May 19, 1656, and was buried at Eton. He was greatly admired by those who knew him; Pearson said that Hales "was a most prodigious example of



**Title-page of Rowlands' "Betraying of Christ," 1598**

an acute and piercing wit, of a vast and illimited knowledge, of a severe and profound judgment." He published very little during his lifetime, but three years after his death his *Golden Remains* were collected, consisting of his sermons and miscellaneous writings. Hales was so lucky in obtaining the rewards of scholarship and so cruelly persecuted for possessing them, that he was called "the happiest and the most unfortunate *helluo* of books" who ever lived.

The criticism of literature, which had formed an interesting, if imperfect, department of prose writing in the age of Elizabeth, was generally neglected in that of her successor. But at the beginning of the reign of James I. two poets crossed swords in a very important controversy. In 1602 Campion published *Observations in the Art of English Poesy*, the design of which was to



Travels

1<sup>st</sup> August . 1599  
 Received by me Thomas Dekker at 60 Sand 6 of m<sup>rs</sup>  
 Philip Hynichson 60 Sand 6 of m<sup>rs</sup> Hynichson 60 Sand 6 of m<sup>rs</sup>  
 60 Sand 6 of m<sup>rs</sup> Hynichson 60 Sand 6 of m<sup>rs</sup> Hynichson 60 Sand 6 of m<sup>rs</sup>  
 Thomas Dekker.

Facsimile receipt for 20s. from Dekker to Philip Henslowe  
*British Museum MSS. 30,262*

discourage the "vulgar and unartificial custom of rhyming." His idea was, as that of Spenser for a brief moment had been, to introduce into English unrhymed accentuated verse-forms. Campion was instantly answered by Daniel in his *Defence of Rhyme*, an able and elegant treatise commending the normal methods of English versification. Ben Jonson wrote a *Discourse of Poesy*, in which he contrived to contradict both Daniel and Campion, but unluckily this is lost. The success of Bacon's *Essays* gave rise to considerable imitation; the only specimens of this which are worthy even of mention are those published in 1600 and 1617 by Sir William Cornwallis.

Curiosities of literature abound in the Jacobean age, and none is more curious than the *Crudities* of THOMAS CORYAT (1577-1617), a book, as its title-page of 1611 tells us, "hastily gobbled up in five months' travels in France, Savoy, Italy, the Grisons, Switzerland, some parts of High Germany and the Netherlands, newly digested in the hungry air of Odcombe in the county of Somerset, and now dispersed to the nourishment of the travelling members of this kingdom." The "said travelling Thomas" went also to Turkey, Persia and India, dying at Surat in December 1617. He was absurd and feather-brained, but a quick observer and an entertaining, though prolix and affected writer. Another traveller, the poet George Sandys, published in 1615 an amusing relation of a journey to the Holy Land. Of purely technical treatises expressed in plain language for ordinary readers there were many published at this time. Among them the highly-coloured and agreeably written "vocations" of GERVASE MARKHAM (1568-1637) take a foremost place. He has been called "the earliest English hackney writer," and after having

essayed to excel in the higher branches of poetical and dramatic literature in his youth, he settled down to the production of books on agriculture,

gardening, and the conduct of a household, which were extremely popular, and which now throw a most valuable light on the social life of the times. The cheerful chatty admonitions of Gervase Markham probably supply us with as close a reproduction as we possess of what the ordinary talk of educated persons was in the reigns of James I. and Charles I., and in this respect are safer guides than the emphatic scenes of the dramatists and the extravagant diatribes of the pamphleteers. The following sentences are taken from Markham's *Farewell to Husbandry* :

In the month of December put your sheep and swine to the peese-ricks, and fat them for the slaughter and market. Now kill your small porks and large bacons, lop hedges and trees, saw out your timber for building, and lay it to season ; and if your land be exceedingly stiff, and rise up in an extraordinary furrow, then in this month begin to plough up that ground whereon you mean to sow clean beans only. Now cover your dainty fruit-trees all over with canvas, and hide all your best flowers from frosts and storms with rotten old horse litter. Now drain all your corn-fields, and, as occasion shall serve, so water and keep moist your meadows. Now become the fowler with piece, nets and all manner of

engine, for in this month no fish is out of season. Now fish for the carp, the bream, pike, trench, barbel, peel and salmon. And, lastly, for your health, eat meats that are hot and nourishing ; drink good wine that is neat, spirity, and lusty ; keep thy body well clad and thy house warm. Forsake whatsoever is phlegmatic, and banish all care from thy heart, for nothing is now more unwholesome than a troubled spirit.



**Sir Henry Wotton**

*After an original portrait*

The great interest in horticulture, too, produced a number of very charming herbals or garden-books, which possessed a certain literary importance. Of these the best was that produced in 1597 by John Gerard (1545-1612), the barber-surgeon, and completed after his death by T. Johnson in 1633. This is richly illustrated with accurate portraits of plants, and forms one of the most interesting and precious books of the Jacobean age

It is well to close our survey of the prose of this period with a brief account of the man in whom its intellectual character seems to be concentrated and sublimated. The central ambition of the prose-writers of the early seventeenth century in England was the collection of knowledge; they rested not from their "unwearied pain of gathering." The searching after antiquities, the



Title-page of the "Crudities," 1611

*With portrait of Coryat*

collation of authorities, the branding of imposture, the rectification of records, these were the most passionate occupations of intellectual men. It must always be recognised that the genuine love of James I. for books and the knowledge that resides in books, mightily spurred on the zeal of his subjects. To be a scholar was a fashionable employment; it was to be like the King; so that Bacon was not speaking an idle word when, in *The Advancement of*

*Learning*, he praised "the perfection of your Majesty's learning, which as a phoenix might call whole vollies of wits to follow you." The greatest of these "wits," a man of colossal acquirements and singularly noble character, was JOHN SELDEN, before whom all the scholars of the Jacobean age bowed down as to their "monarch in letters."

But, although Selden was one of the first men of his time, a giant of erudition and of policy, he was not a great writer of English. In this, too, he was typical of his time. He stood for the past, not for the future. His aim was, in view of the fragility of life, to allow as little knowledge as possible to die with a man; he had no care to add by the creative art to the sum of what would give pleasure to future generations. His *Titles of Honour* starts before the Flood, and his *History of Tithes* goes back to the "prorogations" of Melchisedek. He was the first authority of his age on jurisprudence; he stood in the forefront of Europe in the study of Anglo-Saxon, of the oriental languages, of Talmudic law,—but why should we specify, since he was "of stupendous learning in all kinds and in all languages"? Yet Clarendon, who worshipped him, was obliged to admit that, in the particular of writing English, Selden was "harsh and obscure," and, further, that he was typical of the scholars of his age in "a little undervaluing the beauty of a style and too much propensity to the language of antiquity." His disdain has been fatal to his influence. Selden had no faith in the power of the English language and no enthusiasm for its cultivation. The result is that a man whose whole life was spent with books, and who had one of the most stupendous minds of the century, is hardly included among English authors at all. Of his ponderous works, the only important examples which are not in Latin are the two technical treatises which have already been mentioned, and it is noticeable that the

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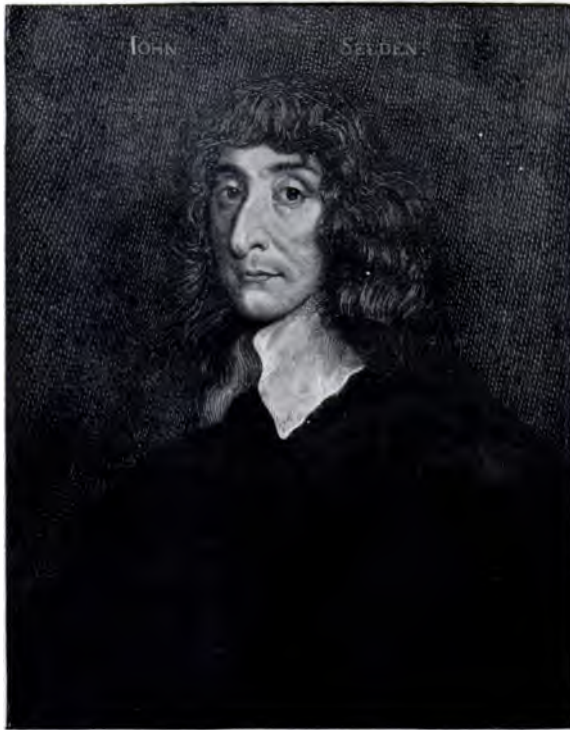
Printed at London by I. B. for R. Jackson, and are to be sold at his shop neere Fleet-street Conduitt. 1615.

Title-page of Markham's "Country Contentments," 1615



book which bears the name of Selden and is best known to readers, that collection of his *Table Talk*, where, as Coleridge said, he makes "every accident an outlet and a vehicle of wisdom," was actually put down in the language of a slightly later age by his secretary, Richard Milward (1609-1680), and is far simpler in style than any undoctored specimen of Selden's prose.

**John Selden** (1584-1654) was the son of a minstrel at West Tarring, in Sussex, where he was born on December 16, 1584. He was taught in the Free School of



**John Selden**

*After the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery*

Chichester and at Hart Hall, Oxford. In 1602 he came up to London to study the law, and became acquainted with Sir Robert Cotton, who employed him to copy records and trained him to be an antiquary. In 1613 we find him annotating Drayton's *Polyolbion*, and intimate with Jonson and Browne. His *Titles of Honour* was published in 1614, and his *History of Tithes* in 1618; the latter was suppressed at the King's command. Later, Selden took a very prominent part in legislative reform, and was imprisoned on several occasions. In 1630, after one of these confinements, he withdrew, to recruit his health, to the Earl of Kent's house at Wrest, which now became his residence. His later career belongs to political and legal history. After the Earl of Kent died, in 1639, Selden continued

to reside at Wrest, and according to Aubrey was secretly married to the Countess, who left him her property when she died in 1651. We are told that Selden had "a long nose inclining to one side, a full popping eye"; that his conversation was of an astonishing fulness, but not so agreeable to listen to as it would have been had his mind been less charged with knowledge, for "his memory at every moment tripped up his speech." Selden was a prodigious collector of MSS., and 8000 of his volumes are now in the Bodleian Library. He died at his house of White Fryars on November 30, 1654.

From the *Table Talk*, where "the sense and motion are wholly Selden's, and most of the words," we may quote some sentences about Pleasure :

Pleasure is nothing else but the intermission of pain, the enjoying of something I am in great trouble for till I have it.



'Tis a wrong way to proportion other men's pleasures to ourselves; 'tis like a little child using a little bird, "O poor bird, thou shalt sleep with me"; so lays it in his bosom, and stifles it with his hot breath: the bird had rather be in the cold air. And yet too 'tis the most pleasing flattery, to like what other men like.

'Tis most undoubtedly true, that all men are equally given to their pleasure; only thus, one man's pleasure lies one way, and another's another. Pleasures are all alike simply considered in themselves: he that hunts, or he that governs the Commonwealth, they both please themselves alike, only we commend that, whereby we ourselves receive some benefit; as if a man place his delight in things that tend to the common good. He that takes pleasure to hear sermons, enjoys himself as much as he that hears plays; and could he that loves plays endeavour to love sermons, possibly he might bring himself to it as well as to any other pleasure. At first it may seem harsh and tedious, but afterwards 'twould be pleasing and delightful. So it falls out in that which is the great pleasure of some men, tobacco; at first they could not abide it, and now they cannot be without it.

Whilst you are upon Earth, enjoy the good things that are here (to that end were they given), and be not melancholy, and wish yourself in heaven. If a king should give you the keeping of a castle, with all things belonging to it, orchards, gardens, &c., and bid you use them; withal promise you that, after twenty years to remove you to the Court, and to make you a Privy Counsellor; if you should neglect your castle, and refuse to eat of those fruits, and sit down, and whine, and wish you were a Privy Counsellor, do you think the King would be pleased with you?

**Table-Talk:**  
BEING THE  
**DISCOURSES**  
OF  
**John Selden Esq;**  
OR HIS  
**S E N C E**  
Of Various  
**M A T T E R S**  
OF  
**WEIGHT and High CONSEQUENCE**  
Relating especially to  
**Religion and State.**

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*Distingue Tempora.*

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L O N D O N,  
Printed for E. Smith, in the Year MDC LXXXIX.

Title-page of Selden's "Table-Talk," 1689



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